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STARFOX ADVENTURES
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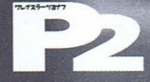
"THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL PURCHASE FOR ANYONE IN POSSESSION OF A PLAYSTATION 2"
10/10



"NO ARGUMENTS, NO EXCEPTIONS IT REALLY IS THAT DAMN GOOD."
9.5/10
CUBE

"AN INSTANT CLASSIC, WITH THE BEST MULTIPLAYER MODE OF ANY CONSOLE TITLE."
9/10
XGAMER

"GAMEPLAY THAT ACTUALLY MANAGES TO SURPASS THAT OF THE LEGENDARY GOLDENEYE"
10/10



"REFUSES TO LET YOUR HEART BEAT AT ANYTHING LESS THAN 170BPM"
10/10
computer and video games

THIS IS SOME DAMN COOL SH*T!



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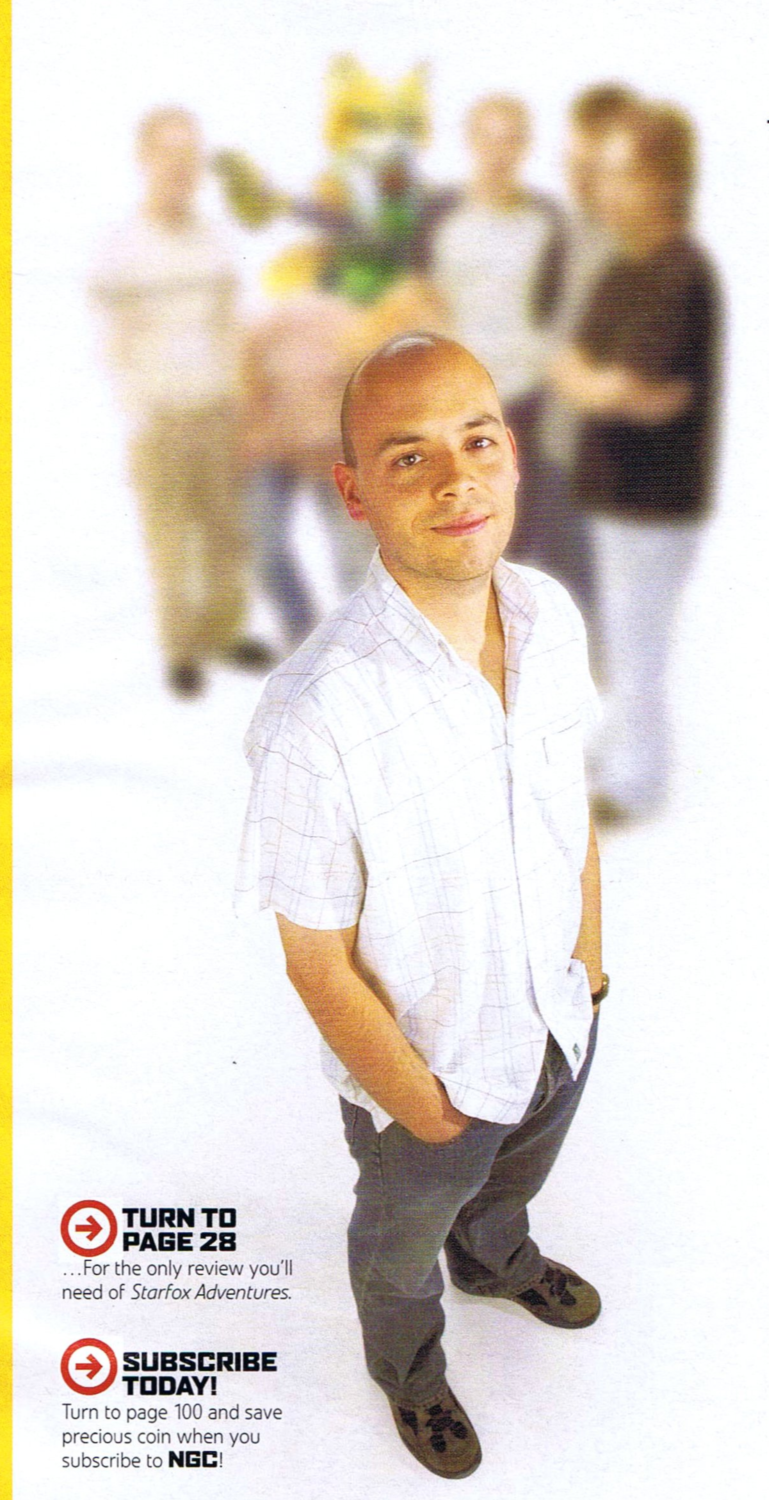
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TURN TO PAGE 28
…For the only review you'll need of *Starfox Adventures*.

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END OF AN ERA

That's that, then – no more Rare games for us. With Nintendo having sold their share in the company and Microsoft stepping up with bulging coffers and bricks of pure gold, you'll never see another Rare game on a Nintendo home console (you can read what we think about the whole situation on page 20). Except, that is, for *Starfox Adventures*.

FOX, STOCK AND BARREL

It's been in development for three and a half years, and started out as an N64 game. It's one of those games whose reputation has grown in the telling – much talked about and passionately believed in. But as Rare's parting shot, can it possibly live up to expectations *and* do justice to a legacy that includes *GoldenEye*, *Perfect Dark* and *Banjo-Kazooie*? Martin played it to death, and knows the answer – you can read his definitive verdict and associated thoughts on page 28. We'd love to know what you think of it, too – do write in and let us know.

GIANT STEPS

But it's not all Rare games this month. As we run up to Christmas, the veritable deluge of games has banished the memory of the summer drought. So along with Nintendo's other big release this month, the magnificent *Eternal Darkness*, we've got the first review of *Die Hard: Vendetta*, a game stashed with good ideas, plus the enjoyable *Rocky* and, in a surprising PAL release, *Doshin the Giant*. So surprising, in fact, that Nintendo's PR company didn't receive any copies to send out for review. Hopefully the lack of publicity surrounding this quirky and obscure game (which first saw life on the ill-fated 64DD) won't affect the chances of a similarly unusual title, the brilliant *Animal Crossing*, getting a PAL release. We've had a good, hard look at the American version on page 68, and it's tremendous fun – fingers crossed for a UK release, then.

Have a good month!

Jes Bickham Editor
ngc@futurenet.co.uk





WHAT'S IN THE MAG?





PAGE 28

STARFOX ADVENTURES

Rare's last game for Nintendo gets the review treatment. Sob!



DIE HARD VENDETTA

Movie-based mayhem chock-full of bad language and bad men. Plus guns, of course.



PAGE 54







STARFOX ADVENTURES

PAGE 28

REVIEWED AND RATED!

Rare's *Zelda*-alike finally hits Gamecube after three-and-a-half years in development. Can it possibly live up to the hype? Read on and find out…

MEET ENJiKi



Since Worldy Bloke mysteriously disappeared way back in **NGC***/67, the lovely Enjiki stepped up and offered to be* **NGC***'s official mascot and delectable magazine guide. She'll show you around and introduce you to the various sections of the magazine, and we should all thank our lucky stars that she came along. Otherwise, you'd have to put up with Martin or Geraint, and frankly, their constant dribbling and muttered gibberish aren't great advertisements for the magazine.*







ETERNAL DARKNESS

Better than *Resident Evil*? Nintendo's own frightfest creates a scare...

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

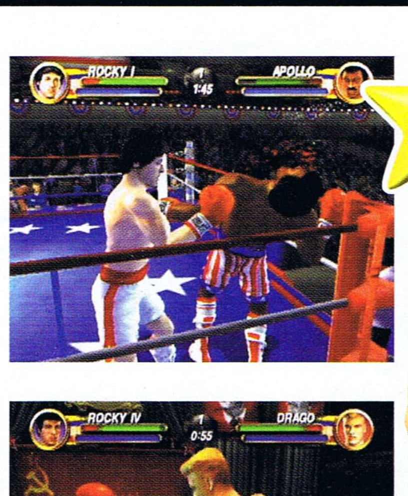
The second part of our massive Shine-getting guide. We've got 'em all for you! ALL!

4
PAGE 80



ANIMAL CROSSING

Creature comforts! The American version of Nintendo's much-lauded 'communication game' is taken for a spin.



PAGE 52





PAGE 102





PAGE 64



PAGE 58



FLAME SKILLED!

We've had Bam's movie licence adaptation in the office for a while now, and we've cooked up some screenshots real nice and tasty for you. Eat them – with your eyes!

THE KNOWLEDGE

- Based on the recent film of the same name.
- Fight evil dragons trying to wipe out the human race – or if you're feeling misanthropic, play as a dragon and have yourself a nice barbecue – with people-meat.
- Ground and air battles take place over some lovely, expansive environments.
- Innovative, 'reactive fire' that burns at different rates.
- Water cannon levels where you have to douse the flames caused by massive dragons.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- Driven (NGC/68)
Not a bad effort by any means. There just wasn't enough of it in the first place, and it wasn't particularly exciting.



Tool up inside the human stronghold before...



...hitting the road to protect your comrades.



Taking to the skies as a dragon is very enjoyable.

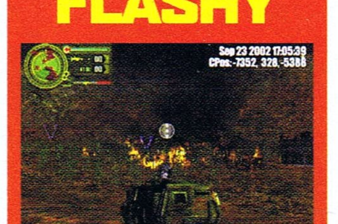
REIGN OF FIRE

Burn baby, burn – it's a human inferno...



If you've not seen the film (which, by the way, is actually quite entertaining in a veg-out kind of way), let us fill you in on the details. A young boy goes to visit his mother, who is working for the London Underground. While he's poking around the underbelly of the capital city, he disturbs a sleeping dragon. As you do. None too chuffed at being woken up, the dragon promptly gets up and (with the help of a hundred or so Mrs Dragons) sets about wiping humanity off the face of the planet.

FLASHY



One of the best features is the reactive fire system. Everything has a flash point and a burn rate, which means different objects will catch fire and burn at different speeds. This needs to be taken account when putting out fires.

Fast forward 20 years or so, and the dragons have pretty much taken over the show. Humans have been reduced to tiny pockets of resistance and everything is looking pretty bleak – that is, until a bunch of crazy yanks arrive with some tanks and helicopters. It's at this point that the game picks up the story.

Reign of Fire is a bizarre mix of *Smugglers Run*, which we reviewed last month, and the driving sections from *Halo* which see you burn around various expansive environments in a jeep. Armed with a rear-mounted gun turret and missile

Put out fires, or just burn stuff – it's up to you!



△ The tank is a particularly meaty vehicle. Not only does it launch devastating artillery, but you can crush the irritating Jackal dragons under your tracks.

△ There are lots of things to set fire to when you're playing as a dragon.



△ The flame effects can be pretty lush.

Bleugh! Bad jalfrezi...



△ Prevent your crops from getting wasted by dousing them – and your burning friends – with the water cannon. If your crops are destroyed, you fail.



△ Driving can prove initially tricky.



△ Levels set in Dover add a touch of variety to the game's environments.

launcher, you attempt to complete mission objectives that involve protecting vital crops, convoys and installations by taking down angry land-based reptiles and impressive screen-filling flying dragons. However, that's not all there is to it. Bam have also added a great deal of variety into the different levels. At certain key points, you take control of fire trucks, where you have to douse burning crops with your water cannon. And at one point in the games story, you can even take control of the reptilian enemy and fly around burning humans and livestock (the latter activity is, it must be said, particularly amusing) as well as picking up vehicles and squishing people and buildings with them. All highly entertaining destructive fun, if truth be told.

"REIGN OF FIRE IS A BIZARRE MIX OF SMUGGLER'S RUN AND THE DRIVING SECTIONS FROM HALO"

So how's it coming together? So far, pretty well. The arcade-style action is strangely satisfying. Taking control of the dragons is an exhilarating experience, and Bam have taken great pains to vary every level to avoid repetition. The only problems were a choppy frame-rate (which we don't doubt will be sorted by release) and some occasionally bizarre vehicle behaviour when they crashed into objects. Other than that it looks like being a surprisingly fun blaster. Very promising.

NGC VERDICT

Despite still having a few technical problems – such as a slightly ropey frame-rate and draw distance – it's clear that the gameplay mechanics themselves are both accomplished, and more importantly, fun. If Bam can tidy up the rough edges in time for release, then there's no reason why this shouldn't be a worthwhile and entertaining purchase. The fact that they've also put in the option to fly around as a dragon and varied the levels significantly means that it's well on the way to making titles like *Smugglers Run* look like tedious, one-dimensional underachievers in comparison. We sincerely hope they can deliver on a premise that holds a great deal of promise. We'll have a review soon...



UK	US	JAPAN
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WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- The frame-rate and draw distance need to be improved upon.
- The chance to be a land-based lizard munching on the legs of humans would be a riot. Although it's unlikely we'll see that.
- There's a bit in the film when the kids cower in a castle basement as a dragon fills the place with flames. We'd like a go at that, and *hear the screams*. Or maybe not.

ANTICIPATION RATING



PREMIERE PLAYBOYS Jes and Geraint recently attended the European premiere of Reign of Fire. Rather than 'entertaining' the lovely Izabella Scorupco (Natalya from GoldenEye), they only managed a drunken photo with the distinctly less lovely Colm Meaney, Star Trek TNG's Chief O'Brien. Morons.

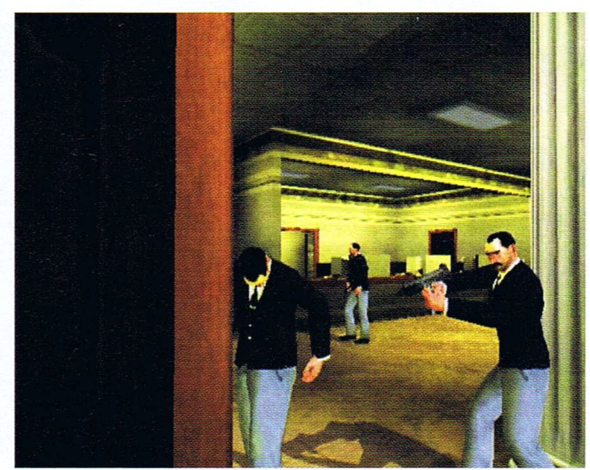



△ Good old night-vision goggles make for an essential piece of kit for anti-terrorist units.


△ A nice South American level. Almost too nice, if you know what we mean. Yes.


△ The graphics in *The Sum of All Fears* are rarely more than functional, although there's some nice lighting to be admired. Plum.


△ This Special Forces fella can't be much cop if he hasn't noticed those terrorists trying to shoot him. Luckily, you can give orders to your teams in the game to avoid this kind of thing.


△ They've all got the same face! THE SAME FACE! Maybe the latest terror campaign involves the cloning of Bill Beaumont. Nasty.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Based on the recently released film of the book, starring Ben Affleck, which involves stolen nuclear missiles and lots of running around.
- Basically a simplified version of Ubi Soft's *Rainbow Six* games, which involve plenty of strategy and planning as well as first-person gunplay.
- Eleven missions that take you all over the world, from Austria to South Africa to good ol' Virginia in the US of A.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Batman Vengeance (NGC/67)**
Earlier Gamecubeage from Ubi Soft, featuring so-so cartoon-based thrills and batarangs.

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING HANDS-ON PLAYTEST

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

Watch the film, play the topical anti-terrorism videogame.

Tom Clancy must be a very rich man indeed. Not content with raking in sacks of pure cash from books that feature enough guns to make Jud feel woozy, he's also reaped the rewards of several videogame adaptations – most notably the *Rainbow Six* series that started on the PC.

The Sum of All Fears is pretty much *Rainbow Six* by any other name. It's based, naturally enough, on the recent film, but follows the *Rainbow Six* style slavishly. Most of the time you'll be storming embassies and indulging in other covert ops by way of planning an attack route for your team members; it's all a bit complicated, but you've got set waypoints so your chums know where to head. This leads to some splendid tactical refinements as you try different routes, and also chop and change equipment depending on how you want to play a particular mission. It's a lot of fun, and challenges the old head muscle, although the game plainly isn't built to look good or move at any kind of speed (to keep it 'realistic', we suspect). Certainly, while it might be a first-person shooter, it's very different to something like *Timesplitters 2*. We'll have a review for you soon.

NGC VERDICT

The *Rainbow Six* games always fared well on the PC, where the use of a keyboard meant that all those tricky commands and waypoint-planning were but a button-press away. As such, console conversions of the game have never quite worked, as the game has always been forced rudely onto a joypad. The more streamlined interface of *The Sum of All Fears*, though, should see the cerebral tactics of this latest Clancy adaptation faring better.



UK	US	JAPAN
XMAS	XMAS	UNLIKELY

ANTICIPATION RATING 3


△ **This is about as high as you'll get in *Clone Wars*. All the missions are air-to-ground based (or vice versa), very much like in Factor 5's *Battle for Naboo* on N64 – which is no bad thing at all.**



△ **Command your supporting army with the D-pad. Unlike in *Rogue Leader*, judicious use of this is one way of keeping the enemy on the back foot, rather than just telling your wingmen to get lost.**



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **Ground-to-air and air-to-ground-based shooter (like in *Battle for Naboo*) from the folk behind the PC's *Battlezone*.**
- **Take control of an assortment of Republic bombers and gunboats and battle the forces of the evil Count Dooku.**
- **Step into the shoes of Mace Windu, Obi-Wan and Anakin, and fight troops in frantic ground battles using your lightsaber and force skills.**

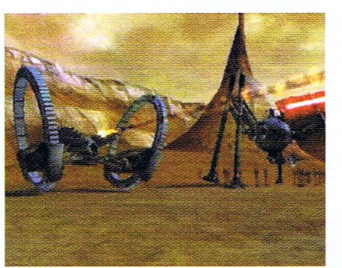
THIS LOT ALSO DID...

Clone Wars is Pandemic's first game for a Nintendo console. Their most notable titles to date have been the not-so-bad *Battlezone 2* and the surprisingly-good *Dark Reign 2* for the PC.





△ **With a decent mix of worlds to battle on, there's a great feeling of diversity, as you learn how to use each planet's environmental features to your advantage.**





△ **Lighting effects have been used to full effect – making *Clone Wars*' pyrotechnic spectacles something to look forward to. Very impressive stuff indeed.**

CLONE WARS

Clone Wars has shaped up to be most impressive…

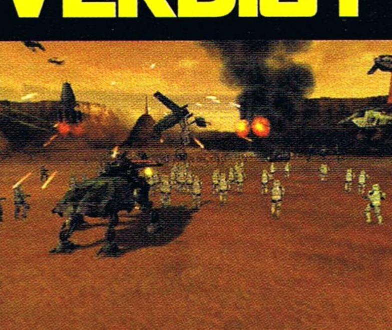
Unfortunately, finished code for *Star Wars: Clone Wars* arrived a day too late for review – so here's a teaser to whet your appetite for next month.

Set just after the end of Episode II, the game takes you through the epic – not to mention legendary – intergalactic war that saw the demise of the Old Republic and the Jedi order that protected it. The game will take place on six different planets – hosts to the 16 *massive* missions you'll be taking part in.

Not only will each mission take you across huge amounts of terrain, but the multitude of objectives for each level will ensure that all-important feeling of scale won't disappoint. Indeed, the most strikingly apparent thing about *Clone Wars* is the sheer jaw-dropping level of activity taking place on screen at any given time – it makes *Rogue Leader*'s Battle of Hoth look like a girlie playground scrap, and is reminiscent the hectic and climatic battle at the end of Episode II. Very impressive in itself – especially when you consider the smooth frame-rate – but the fact that you can actually participate at ground level for some hand-to-hand combat brings a sense of perspective to the game that *Rogue Leader*'s flight-only gameplay could never have achieved. From what little we've played so far, things are looking very promising.

NGC VERDICT

Developers Pandemic have come up trumps with a superb arcade-action game engine that's both slick and accessible while coping with some seriously frantic action. But that's not all there is to it. There are some intriguing levels of strategy in the game too. Utilising similar commands like in *Rogue Leader*, *Clone Wars* goes a step further. Throw in a multiplayer with different scenarios, and you're looking at one fine slice of action.



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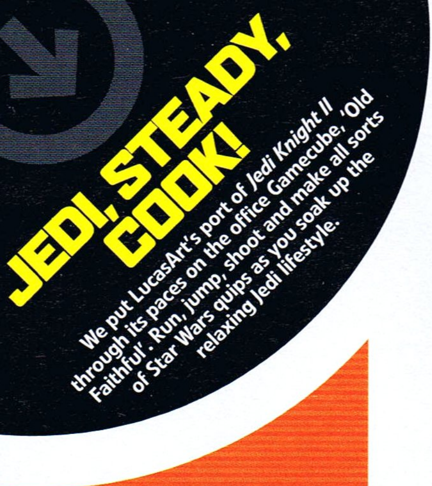
ANTICIPATION RATING

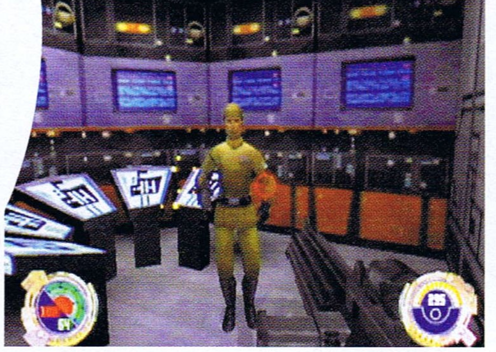






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△ Nice tunic. But he's dim officer material all the same.


△ Those force powers sure are handy in a pinch.

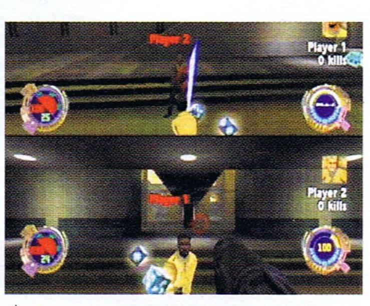

△ A handy infra-red scope for your delectation. There's loads of equipment.

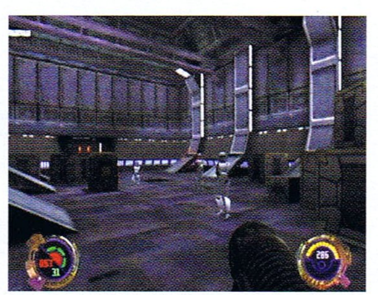


THE KNOWLEDGE

- A conversion of the PC original, which was very well received by our robot-like comrades on PC Gamer.
- A first-person shooter, but you don't just use guns. As crazy Jedi fellow Kyle Katarn, you've also got access to freaky force witchcraft, and, of course, a lightsaber. Useful for deflecting laser bolts and chopping things up.
- Includes a fully-fledged multiplayer mode, with bots and full use of all weapons and force powers.


△ Good to see that stormtroopers are as stupid as ever. Look! There's a fella with a lightsaber! Can't you see him?


△ The multiplayer game is reasonably and consistently smooth. Not half bad.


△ Most locations stay true to the Star Wars 'look'. Very Death Star indeed.

THIS LOT ALSO DID…

Rogue Leader (NGC/68)
Utterly stunning Gamecube launch game, but darn hard and with a crazy learning curve.

JEDI OUTCAST

A long time ago, on a PC far, far, away… or something.




Or *Jedi Knight 2*, as it's otherwise known. The back end of 2002 is looking good for Gamecube Star Wars fans – with this, *Bounty Hunter* and *Clone Wars* all just around the corner, you can be assured of a Christmas as full and mighty as George Lucas' bristly chin. And that's got to be a good thing.

Jedi Outcast might very well be a quickly converted port of a PC game, but it's one that has plenty going for it. Ostensibly a first-person shooter, although there's more to it than that, you play as Kyle Katarn, a Jedi paradoxically in possession of Dark Side powers. But this isn't just the usual run-and-shoot blaster you might be expecting – the addition of force powers, that enable you to do such things as jump mightily high, or use your lightsaber as an ersatz boomerang, make for a varied game that requires a bit of thought. Powers can also be upgraded – so at full 'strength', for example, your thrown lightsaber will automatically seek out enemies, and dice them.

There's an imposing sense of scale here, too – giant levels and pits that stretch down into dizzying darkness. It's all terribly evocative, even if the graphics do bear the scars of their PC origins (ie, characters are angular and not particularly well-animated). Look out for the review next month.

NGC VERDICT

There's a lot to *Jedi Knight 2* (or *Jedi Outcast*, or even *Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast*, if you like). The force powers work well, and the myriad ways to utilise a lightsaber are pleasing. And it's *big*. However, the game is graphically dated, it features some irritating puzzles and an over-reliance on *Turok*-style jumping, and the frame-rate is currently somewhat inconsistent. We're hoping this will be fixed by the time we get final review code.



UK	US	JAPAN
NOV	NOV	TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 **3** 4 5

TIME WARP The many Star Wars geeks out there might like to know that *Jedi Outcast* is set 13 years after the events of Return of the Jedi. Who'd have thunk it, eh? Incredible.

"You can expect old-fashioned puzzles and triggered events"

HOT WHEELS VELOCITY X

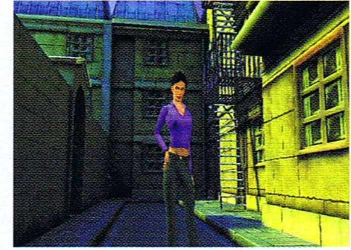
More crazy racing with THQ's tiny cars.





If you ever owned an N64 then you might have come across the odd *Hot Wheels* game from THQ – basically stunt-based racing on kerr-azy looping tracks, with titchy little cars. This new affair takes a more mission-based view of things with sprawling multi-path levels, but it's still a speedy game. Not on the top of our Most Wanted list, but it might surprise yet.











BROKEN SWORD

Unveiled for the first time at ECTS the other month, the third *Broken Sword* game should have adventure fans everywhere salivating, jumping up and down and generally getting excited. Subtitled *The Sleeping Dragon*, this new chapter sees old characters returning for more mysterious doings – but now it's all in three fancy dimensions. Blimey.

That said, although there will be *Tomb Raider*-esque exploration and movement, you can expect old-fashioned puzzles and *Shenmue*-style triggered events. More than that, developers Revolution aren't saying.

HARRY POTTER

The Chamber exposed!

NGC POTTER SHOTS!
Brand-spankin'-new shots of the new Harry Potter game, The Chamber of Secrets. Based on the second book and film, it is.

Not bad this, you know. We only sat down with it for an hour, but we were still impressed.

Borrowing elements from the likes of *Zelda OOT*, *Chamber of Secrets* is a smart, free-roaming adventure around Hogwarts, London and the Burrow. On your journey, you can collect new spells and interact with a huge cast of characters.

EA have taken pains to keep the locations true to both book and film, and JK Rowling herself penned most of the dialogue and written text. Stuffed to the brim with some great minigames and even a GBA link-up which opens new locations, this is shaping up very nicely indeed.



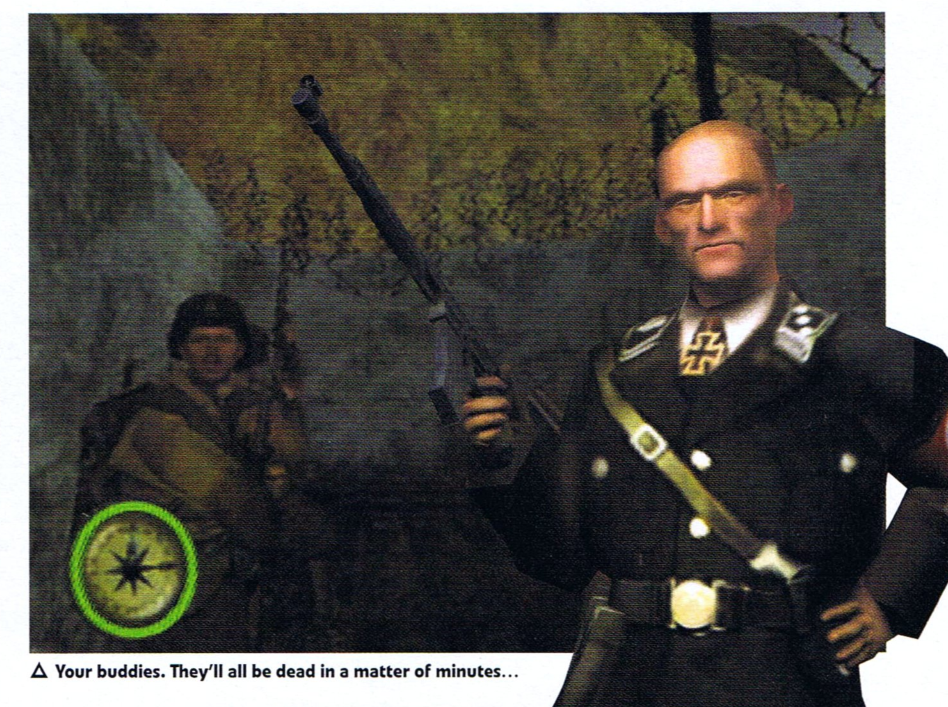
△ **Boy-wizard Potter gets fruity with the magic. Can you feel it? Huh?**








Δ Storming Omaha Beach is horribly realistic. Invading the bunkers at the far end is no picnic, either.


Δ Your buddies. They'll all be dead in a matter of minutes…






Δ While the first level of the game resembles the opening of Saving Private Ryan, later levels see you in varied locations.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- A straight port of the acclaimed PS2 game – no new extras but it's looking good.
- First appeared on the PSone, which sported two instalments.
- Inspired by the brutal war scenes from Spielberg's Saving Private Ryan – the first level sees you storming Omaha Beach in a digital recreation of the film's opening scenes.
- Veteran military man Captain Dale Die served as military consultant for the game, to ensure authenticity.

THIS LOT ALSO DID…

- Agent Under Fire (NGC/70)

Also published by EA. A curate's egg of a game – good in parts but ultimately disappointing.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE

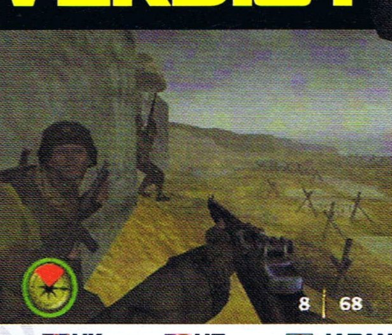
Once more unto the breach in brutally rendered splendour…


By the merest whisker of a deadline, we missed out on reviewing *Medal Of Honor: Frontline* this month, so expect to see the game on sale before our review (in the next issue) hits the stands. However, we did manage to get a good gander at the virtually-finished code, and it's shaping up to be a beauty. Admittedly, there are no improvements here over the PS2 original, released earlier this year, but we don't mind, given how impressive the game is anyway.

Naturally, the opening Saving Private Ryan-esque level is the highest-profile recommendation the game has so far offered, with deafening explosions and an altogether horrifying atmosphere, but later stages, although less packed with sturm und drang, are equally as impressive. Picking your way through an embattled, ruined French town, or running through beautifully realised fields – complete with haystacks and windmills – make for a varied but nonetheless thematically consistent experience. There's perhaps one too many instances of assaulting various Nazi-held warehouses and the like, and there's little here in the way of stealth or subtlety, but as far as magnificently atmospheric shooters with astounding production values go, this should be the bee's knees. Review next month, then!

NGC VERDICT

While we can't help but feel disappointed that EA haven't added any bells or whistles to the Gamecube *Medal of Honor*, we also can't complain because even a straight port of the game is great news indeed. And this plays exactly like the PS2 version – it looks a little better, and from what we've seen so far (fingers crossed) runs at an equivalent speed. Hopefully the final code won't suffer from the slowdown issues that dogged previous ports like *SSX Tricky*.



UK	US	JAPAN
NOV	NOV	TBA

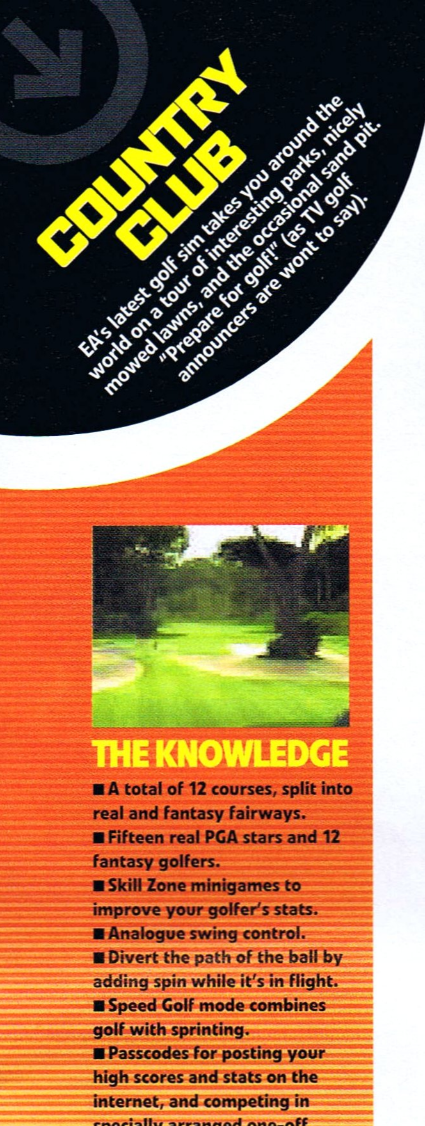
ANTICIPATION RATING







GUNS! The German MG42 machine gun could penetrate brick walls from a distance of a mile. Well, Jud's did last week when he tried adding extra 'ventilation holes' to his kitchen with it.



COUNTRY CLUB

EA's latest golf sim takes you around the world on a tour of interesting parks, nicely mowed lawns, and the occasional sand pit. "Prepare for golf!" (as TV golf announcers are wont to say).

THE KNOWLEDGE

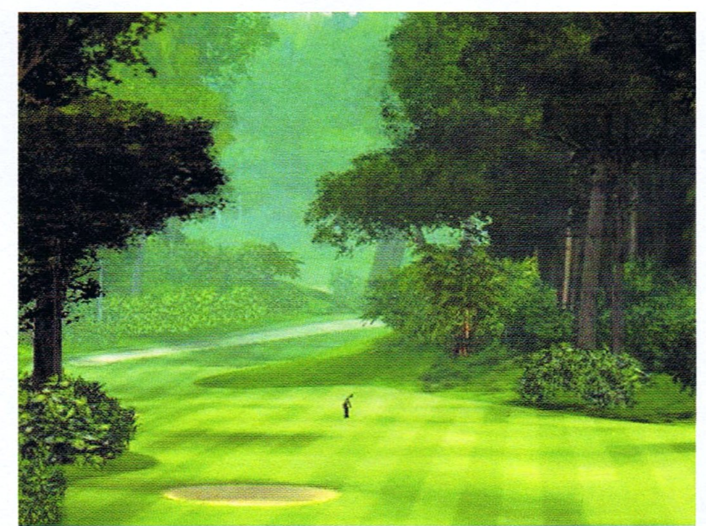
- A total of 12 courses, split into real and fantasy fairways.
- Fifteen real PGA stars and 12 fantasy golfers.
- Skill Zone minigames to improve your golfer's stats.
- Analogue swing control.
- Divert the path of the ball by adding spin while it's in flight.
- Speed Golf mode combines golf with sprinting.
- Passcodes for posting your high scores and stats on the internet, and competing in specially arranged one-off tournaments. Bling!



THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **FIFA 2003 (NGC/75)** Football update that managed to escape its review this month.
- **Medal of Honor: Frontline (NGC/75)** Ditto for this WWII shooter.





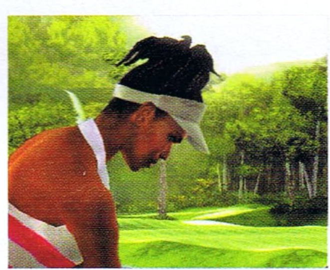
△ There's no place lonelier than a computer game golf course. Very pretty, though. The trees are probably drawn with the Tree-o-matic Render EngiNe™.



△ Seems unfair to be hitting such a tiny ball with such a large stick.



△ Preparing to whack it over the waterfall, where the pixies live.



△ Lady golfers can't play as well as the men, so they earn less (*Stop that – Ed*)



△ Still, they do look good in a pair of hotpants. Ahh, ladies. Bless 'em.



△ This course is in bonny Scotland, where as we all know, the law says every man must wear a hairy skirt. It's for comedy value – and the tourists love it.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

Driving towards success with the world's biggest golf game.

Remember the slightly iffy *Cyber Tiger* on the N64? Well cast it from your mind, because this latest Tiger Woods sim looks set to be in a league of its own as far as golf games go.

It's packed with a staggeringly huge array of modes and options, and includes an excellent analogue control system that's a lot less hit-and-miss than the traditional power meter you get in this sort of thing.

And unlike other golf games, your involvement doesn't end as soon as the club strikes the ball. The camera follows it as it zips through the air, and if you see it beginning to swerve off course you can add spin by hitting the Z-button, helping influence the path of the shot.

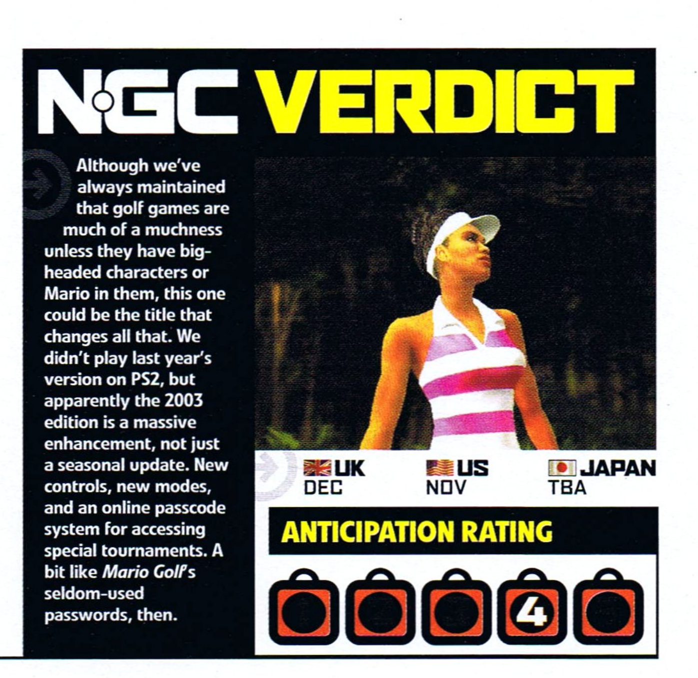
Among the many bonus games, there's a Speed Golf mode in which you compete, via a split screen, to finish a hole as quickly as possible. This involves whacking the ball, then tapping away to make your golfer run to find where it landed, before taking the next shot.

Victory in any mode allows you to take money from your opponent's account, which should lead to a few amusing tantrums. The cash buys stat points or equipment to make your golfer even tougher to beat.

What we've seen so far has been very impressive. With any luck, we'll have a review for you next month.

NGC VERDICT

Although we've always maintained that golf games are much of a muchness unless they have big-headed characters or Mario in them, this one could be the title that changes all that. We didn't play last year's version on PS2, but apparently the 2003 edition is a massive enhancement, not just a seasonal update. New controls, new modes, and an online passcode system for accessing special tournaments. A bit like *Mario Golf's* seldom-used passwords, then.



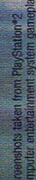
UK	US	JAPAN
DEC	NOV	TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING: 4

MINORITY REPORT™
THE VIDEOGAME

RELIVE THE MOVIE EXPERIENCE

EVERYBODY RUNS





An all-new adventure as Precrime's Top Cop John Anderton.



Take on human and robotic enemies with hand-to-hand combat moves and an explosive arsenal of weapons.



Immerse yourself in over 40 levels of non-stop action/adventure with futuristic weapons and devices straight out of the movie.

COMING SOON



















DREAMWORKS



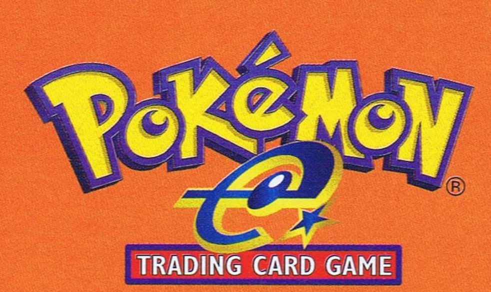
activision.com

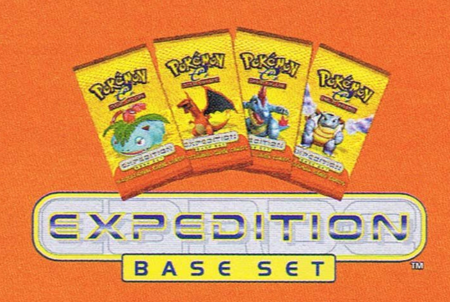
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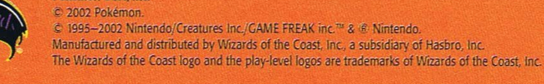
Phone the Game Support Line on 08457 125599 to find a stockist near you

email: wizards@hasbro.co.uk

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Argos

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SCOOBY DOO NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS

Perhaps hoping to catch the tiniest bit of recognition and publicity from the recent dreadful Scooby Doo movie, THQ have ported over *Night of 100 Frights* from the dear old PlayStation 2. As everyone's favourite ghost-busting dog, you collect Scooby Snacks and, er, bust ghosts. Or Old Man Whatsisname in disguise, as is usually the case. Of course, the film was a dog-shaped turkey, and the the game didn't get particularly great reviews on Sony's big black box, but the kids might like it. Maybe.

STARCRAFT GHOST




Just announced from Blizzard, who are perhaps best-known for the excellent *Warcraft* series on the PC, *Starcraft Ghost* is a first-person spin-off from – get this – *Starcraft*, a sci-fi real-time strategy affair.

Featuring three races – the ancient and elite Protoss, hardy Terrans, and slimy Alien-like Zerg – details on how the game plays are scarce, although you control Nova, a hardened veteran with psionic abilities and funky gadget-laden power armour. Sounds promising, doesn't it?



RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

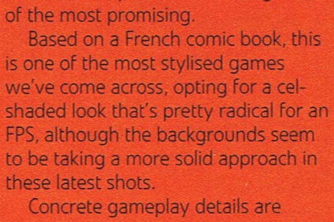


Another month, and more *Resi Zero* shots. Specifically, newly-revealed, munt-ugly monsters. Say hello to the Hunter and some horrible insect-thing, created no doubt by meddling in things man should leave well alone.

XIII

NGC BRAND NEW SHOTS! From the digital scribe-fingers of Ubi Soft's Picture Droids to the pages of this very journal, make your eyes drunk on pure XIII.

More shots of the comic shooter…

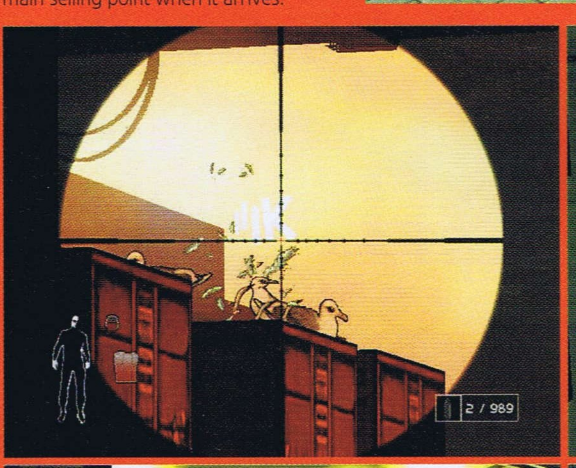


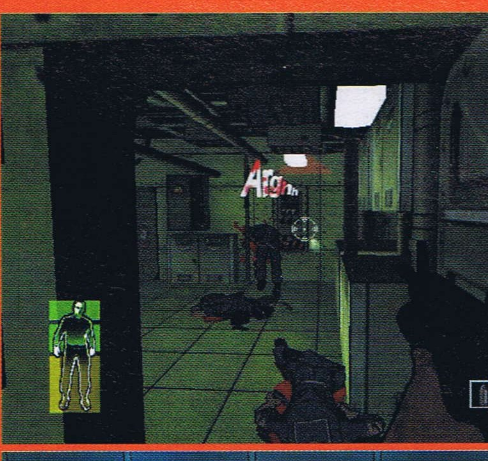
Gamecube might not have had it's *GoldenEye* quite yet – although *Timesplitters 2* has certainly come darn close – but it's certainly being treated to some great first-person shooters, with the oddly-named *XIII* being one of the most promising.

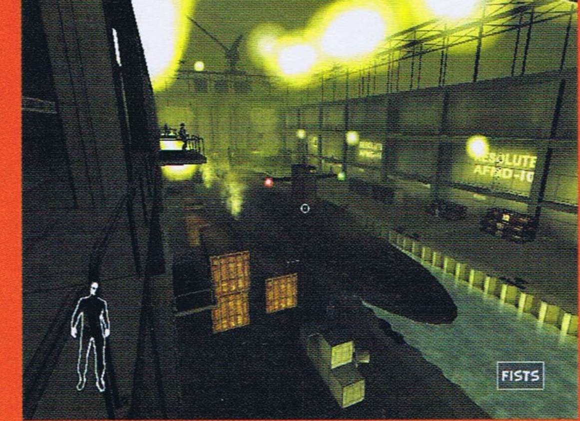
Based on a French comic book, this is one of the most stylised games we've come across, opting for a cel-shaded look that's pretty radical for an FPS, although the backgrounds seem to be taking a more solid approach in these latest shots.

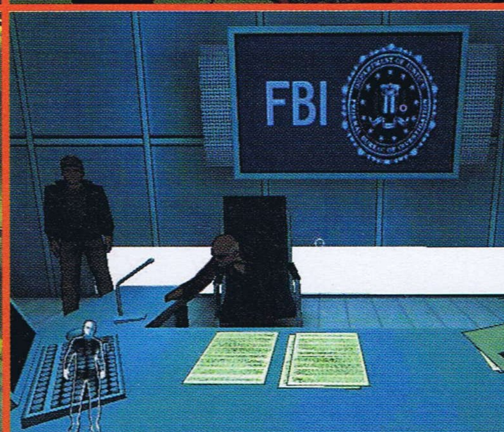
Concrete gameplay details are currently under wraps, but going by the code we've played in the past, it's going to be at the very least a solid and smooth shooter. Hopefully the graphical novelty won't be the game's main selling point when it arrives.











NEWSDESK

IN NEWS THIS MONTH



△ The new-and-improved *Kameo* looks gorgeous. Gone are the sandy desert locations of the previous showreel – in are lush forests and dancing tigers. Crikey.



△ In the introductory 'Rare on Xbox' movie, Conker whittles the Xbox logo into the Rare name. Banjo mumbles something in his backwoods twang, bless him.

BYE-BYE RARE



XBOX OWNERS WILL GET A PERFECT DARK SEQUEL, KAMEO AND A WHOLE LOT MORE... BY JES BICKHAM

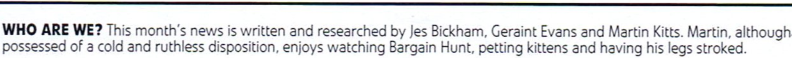
The rumours turned out to be true, then. At Microsoft's X02 event, held in Seville, Spain, on 24th September, the corporation announced it had purchased Rare. Chris Stamper, chairman and technical director of Rare, said: "Our mission at Rare has always been to make the industry's best games for the widest possible audience. Teaming with Microsoft gives us the best opportunity to create this goal." The sale was said to have cost Microsoft $375 million.

Speaking to US news channel CNN, Nintendo's US president had this to say on the subject of why Nintendo didn't buy Rare themselves: "We passed on this opportunity for very good business reasons". Given that Nintendo held a 49 per cent stake in Rare, they must have collected a pretty penny out of the deal.

And this is the crux of the matter. Nintendo weren't being stupid in letting Rare go, as many people seem to think, they were being very canny. They made a lot of money out of the sale, and this can be used to fund upcoming projects and perhaps even buy new (and cheaper) development houses. Indeed, the figures Nintendo quoted concerning how profitable Rare have been for them of late makes the situation seem like pure common sense. Rare software sales accounted for 9.5 per cent of Nintendo sales in 2001, and only 1.5 per cent in 2002. Of course, it can be argued that Rare haven't released a game since mid-2001 and therefore haven't had the opportunity to make Nintendo money yet on the Gamecube – that 1.5 per cent must have been residual sales of N64 and GBC games – but the company has never been the most prolific of development houses. Arguably, it was

STOP PRESS

JAPAN LOVES FOX
Western games traditionally don't sell as well as homegrown ones in the fair land of Japan – but Starfox Adventures seems to have broken the rule. It went straight to number one in its first week of release, selling 125,000 copies, although there weren't many big names for it to go up against. Perhaps it's something to do with it the similarity to Zelda, eh?



WHO ARE WE? This month's news is written and researched by Jes Bickham, Geraint Evans and Martin Kitts. Martin, although possessed of a cold and ruthless disposition, enjoys watching Bargain Hunt, petting kittens and having his legs stroked.



Be seeing you, boys...

GAMES GALORE

Rare showed tantalising glimpses of what they've got coming for Xbox at X02 – and the *Kameo* trailer was of the most interest (Rare will retain all their intellectual properties, and Nintendo's own characters, such as Donkey Kong, have reverted back to them). Gone are the desert environments of the early footage, and in have come lush forest areas, bipedal tigers performing what seems to be the All Blacks' Haka, and some 3D exploration redolent of *Banjo-Kazooie* and *Donkey Kong 64*. The transform-into-an-animal hook is still present, although it no longer features as strongly, and the game is slated for a Spring 2003 release.

All very impressive – and the confirmed existence of a *Perfect Dark* sequel (plus a few precious seconds of a redesigned Joanna Dark strutting her stuff) was both pleasing and galling at the same time. Indeed, Joanna Dark has herself undergone something of a redesign, looking more cartoony and more Japanese. Some might say the new Jo Dark bears the handiwork of one Wil Overton, who used to be art editor of **NGC** back when it was N64 Magazine, but now works at Rare...

GoldenEye and *Perfect Dark* that made the most cash, with *Banjo-Kazooie*, its sequel, and *Donkey Kong 64* bringing up the rear – lower-tier titles such as *Jet Force Gemini* and *Conker's Bad Fur Day* (no matter how good they might actually have been) were perceived as flops (it didn't help that *Conker* was published by THQ in the UK, rather than Nintendo, which speaks volumes).

SAD BUT TRUE

Nonetheless, the sale has been a huge psychological blow for many Gamecube

> **"NINTENDO WEREN'T BEING AS DUMB AS MANY PEOPLE THINK – THEY MADE A LOT OF MONEY ON THE SALE"**

owners, especially given that the possibility of a *Perfect Dark* sequel provided a reason to buy a Cube for many. The footage shown at X02 must have felt like a slap in the face – for instance, an extended trailer for *Kameo* was shown along with a promo reel that feature Joanna Dark, Conker, Banjo and *Kameo*'s main character. Apparently, Rare have five games scheduled for release in the next two years, giving Xbox owners a whole lot to look forward to. Indeed, those of a more cynical mind might suggest that Xbox owners need something else to look forward to other than *Halo 2*, and the ridiculous price Microsoft paid for Rare is indicative of their desperation to give Xbox some credibility.

But what do we think? We're obviously disappointed that Rare will no longer be developing for the Gamecube, and that the game we were all anticipating – *Perfect Dark Zero* – won't appear on a tiny 8cm disc. But we're pragmatic about the whole thing, and wish them the very best of luck. And we'll be watching their career on Xbox with interest. It's a powerful machine, and whatever results they get are sure to be spectacular.

And of course, it's not as if Rare were the only company of note developing for Gamecube. With Silicon Knights and Retro Studios both fast gaining a reputation for excellence (*Eternal Darkness* is fabulous and *Metroid Prime* is shaping up magnificently) and more quality third-party games than you can shake a stick at (see *Timesplitters 2* and *Resident Evil*, for a start) it's not as if the Cube's been handed a death sentence.

So we wouldn't worry too much about the Rare sale. These things happen, unfortunately, but the future is still blinding for Gamecube, and there's plenty of stuff to be excited about.

But now it's over to you: what were your thoughts on the Rare sale? Let us see...

RARE REACTION

How could they betray Nintendo, their lifelong partners?
Thomas Reekie, via email

I have been a loyal Nintendo fan for many years but this news makes me want to buy an Xbox.
Conor McSweeney, via email

I can't help but feel that Rare are better off now (from a creative point of view) – they don't have ten Mickey Mouse titles to develope anymore...
Alun McRae, via email

I don't think people are bothered. Towards the end they didn't sell very much and became a bit cocky.
Shaun Laird, via email

The Xbox's controller will certainly help destroy a brilliant game (*Perfect Dark*).
Duncan Franklin, via email

Why has this happened to Nintendo and their fans?
Bastiaan Rock, Netherlands

Microsoft, even with Rare, could never compete with Nintendo, but isn't it logical to have all the good developers working on Gamecube?
Ben Tatlow, London

I've got a whole stack of cel-shaded bullets with their names on.
Dominic Thompson, Newcastle

I have just played *Perfect Dark*. It's a beautiful game. I want to kill Gates.
'Piszed', via email

It's a shock and I hope Nintendo don't lose any gaming appeal.
Scott Ely, Colchester

Microsoft are doing what they did with Apple – trying to monopolise the market. Gits.
Bertie Speirs, London

Will they be missed that much? Rare don't have much output and they haven't release a Gamecube game in Europe...
James Mudd, County Durham

I feel genuinely let down by Nintendo. Rare have often made better games than Nintendo themselves.
Andrew Gimber, via email

I wouldn't be surprised if the only console available in the future will be a Microsoft one.
Jonathan Hallier, via email

I don't blame Messrs Stamper. They've brought up a company from scratch and now it's worth millions. MILLIONS!
Fred Riding, Surrey

Why can't they see that we want Rare, we need Rare, we LOVE Rare?
David Tucker, via email

Have Rare no heart? Why Xbox, the worst of the three major consoles? WHY?
Jeremy Young, Kent

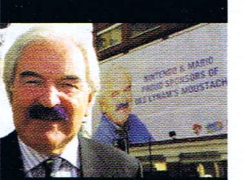
Although this is sad and bitterly ironic considering your *Perfect Dark* weapons suggestions in issue 72, everyone should just get over it.
Edwin Davies, Warks

Nintendo have underestimated Rare's worth and their pulling power. It makes no sense to give these franchises away. I am very disillusioned by Nintendo now.
Andre Joseph, Plymouth

Rare go on about Microsoft's 'dedication to games', but they just threw so much money at them that they couldn't refuse.
David Press, via email

I wonder how stupid Nintendo have been. First they cel-shade their best game, Zelda... *(Snip! – Ed)*
Oyvind Ropstad, Norway





MARIO LYNAM

Never one to pass up a cheap publicity stunt, Nintendo launched *Mario Sunshine* in style – by sponsoring Des Lynam's moustache for a year (sigh). Poor old Des had to go out and parade himself on street corners with a purple 'tache, probably wondering who on earth Mario is and what the hell he was doing. ITV can't be paying him much. Still, in other news, *Super Mario Sunshine* sold 175,000 copies in the UK on its first five days on sale, a remarkable achievement – especially considering Gamecube sales shot up around 40 per cent too. The little plumber's still got it, bless him.



SMALL SAMURAI

Jealous of PS2 owners getting all the sword-slashing glory? Be jealous no more, dear readers, for the almighty Capcom have confirmed *Onimusha Tactics* for the GBA. Sing hosanna! Based on the PS2's *Onimusha 2*, which itself can be described as *Resident Evil* in feudal Japan, it should be on sale in Japan by the time you read this. Hopefully a PAL release will be forthcoming.

DEADLY GAMES
This month a 24-year-old unemployed South Korean died after playing games for 86 hours straight in an internet cafe. Yes, 86 hours. That's almost four days. The poor fellow apparently didn't eat or sleep during this period, and after fainting when he eventually did get up for a break, was later found dead in a restroom. It's a shocking story and terrible news, but frankly, no matter what some of the newspapers might say, it's got little to do with computer games – we'd imagine doing anything for 86 hours straight without sustenance or rest would do the same.



"It's not the Rare swansong we were hoping for"

DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.



MOST WANTED!

The 25 games you've been eagerly rubbing your thighs over for the last 30 days…



THIS MONTH

For Kittsy's *massive* ten-page *Starfox Adventures* review, head on over to page 28. To satisfy any more of your Most Wanted hunger-pangs, we have some juicy new details about *Zelda* on page 24 and a huge feature on the basics of *Phantasy Star Online* starting on page 102. Enjoy.



1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

UK	US	JAPAN
2003	2003	DEC 2002

There he is – gripping a slippery porker roughly 1.5 times the size of his own head. Not that there's anything strange in that, you understand, but we've grown increasingly worried about that boy's relationship with farmyard animals. First chickens. Now pigs. As long as he stays away from sheep, Geraint will be 'relieved'.



2 METROID PRIME

UK	US	JAPAN
2003	DEC	2003

The more we see the more we want, and by the looks of things, you're all thinking along the very same lines. Detailed environments, incredible bosses, gut-wrenchingly tense atmosphere and the kind of action that'll have Samus panel-beating her breastplates back into shape for weeks on end.



3 MARIO KART GC

UK	US	JAPAN
2003/04	2003/04	2003/04

Another month passes and we're still none the wiser as to what's going on with this one. Rumours are that it'll be one of Nintendo's first online games – but then if we believed rumours, we'd think Rare had been bought out by Microsoft… HA HA HA HA HAHA MWA *cough* mwa… ha… ha. Oh.



4 STARFOX ADVENTURES

UK	US	JAPAN
NOV	NOW	NOW

Not long after you read this, you'll be able to get your hands on a copy all of your own – but after extensive playing it's safe to say it isn't the Rare swansong we were hoping for. Still, you can make up your own mind as to whether repetitive puzzles and needless backtracking can be called 'fun'.



5 TIMESPLITTERS 2

UK	US	JAPAN
NOW	NOW	TBC

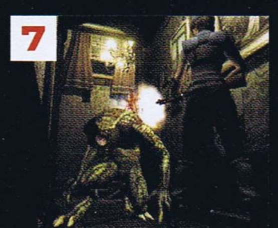
If you want it so badly, we suggest you get down the shop and buy it. Now. It's definitely one of the GC's best games of the year and, more than likely, the one game that'll dominate your Gamecube's disc tray for the next few months. Absolutely unmissable in every way. Essential.



6 SOUL CALIBUR 2

UK	US	JAPAN
2003	2003	2003

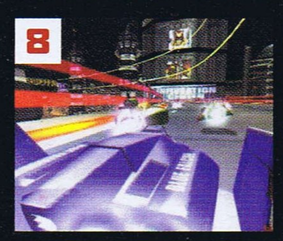
With the future of the series still undecided as far as its initial platform release is concerned, hopes are riding high that a Gamecube appearance is still on track for next year. Geraint, tenderly nursing an arcade stick, nightly prays that this – and Sung Mina's return – will be confirmed in due course.



7 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

UK	US	JAPAN
2003	2003	DEC

Walk around in the dark pointing guns at all manner of beastly creatures. Includes minimal stores of ammunition, 'thrilling' door-opening animations and a guy who looks a little bit like Jesus. Except he's angrier, and impolite at dinner parties. Although we reckon he's nifty at party tricks.



8 F-ZERO GC

UK	US	JAPAN
2003	2003	2003

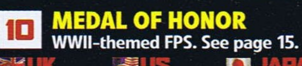
It's taken its time getting into the top… er, nine, but for some reason, there's been a upturn in interest for this title. Developed by the same team behind the super *Daytona USA*, it's safe to say that this will be a certified winner. It even has a feature that will allow you link up with an arcade version. Wick!



9 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

UK	US	JAPAN
2003	NOV	OUT NOW

The main cause of a worrying spate of absenteeism in the office, this. Time-consuming and thoroughly absorbing – this online RPG has already gone live in Japan, and it works like a dream. Unfortunately, there's been no specific release date for Europe as yet. Check out our Beginners' Guide on page 102…



#	Game	Description	UK	US	JAPAN
10	MEDAL OF HONOR	WWII-themed FPS. See page 15.	NOV	NOV	UNLIKELY
11	TONY HAWK'S 4	Skate on a plank 'busting tricks'.	XMAS	NOV	DOUBT IT
12	MARIO TENNIS	Sequel to the brilliant N64 game.	2003	2003	2003
13	FINAL FANTASY	FMV. Again and again and again…	2003	2003	2003
14	JAMES BOND: NIGHTFIRE	Bond. Guns. Gadgets. Ladies.	2003	2003	2003
15	1080° 2	Snow. Speed. 'Gnarly' hats. Boards.	2003	2003	2003
16	XIII	Sweet FPS based on a comic book.	2003	2003	UNLIKELY
17	DRIVER 3	Drive cars. Break laws. Again.	2003	2003	2003
18	EVOLUTION WORLDS	Nice-looking traditional RPG.	2003	2003	2003
19	STAR WARS: CLONE WARS	More Star Wars. Looks good too.	NOV	NOV	TBA
20	IKARUGA	Awesome shooter from Treasure.	2003	2003	2003
21	MARIO GOLF	Mario and chums play golf…	2003	2003	2003
22	SKIES OF ARCADIA	22nd?! Are you people mental?!?	2003	2003	2003
23	STARFOX ARMADA	Proper flying-and-shooting game.	2003	2003	2003
24	JEDI OUTCAST	FPS in the Star Wars universe.	NOV	NOV	UNLIKELY
25	ANIMAL BONFIRE	Burn mammals. Smell the protein.	HEAR	THEM	WHIMPER!

WRITE TO… MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

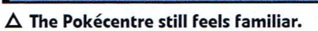


DID YOU KNOW? Ubi Soft's forthcoming *XIII* first-person shooter is based on a Belgian comic of the same name – penned by Jean Van Hamme with artwork from William Vance. It follows the story of Jason Mullway, who after losing his memory, is pursued by the FBI for an assassination attempt.

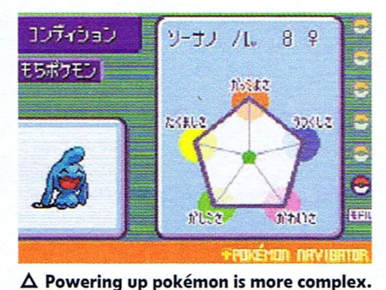








△ The Pokécentre still feels familiar.



△ Powering up pokémon is more complex.

FOUR-WAY POKEMON

More details and screenshots for Nintendo's long awaited next-gen *Pokémon* sequels…

It seems to be taking absolutely ages to make it's appearance, but Japanese gamers don't have all that long to wait as the scheduled street date for this highly anticipated pair of titles is 21st of November.

As ever, Nintendo have released a flood of new shots and information preceding the launch, and – just like the rest of the shots we've seen – they're not exactly jaw-dropping. Still, the proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating, and these new pokémon games may well have some extra tricks up their sleeves that will make us pee our pants in some mild manner of excitement.

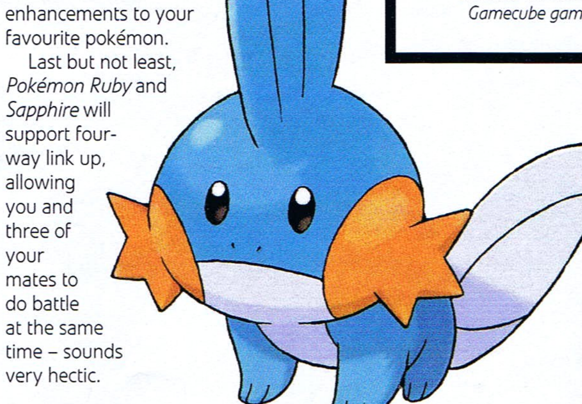
First and foremost, this new breed of Pokémon games promises to be the series' most complicated yet. Not content with adding another 100 monsters into the games, these new critters will be be hybrid breeds, the likes of which you'll never have seen, adding a new tactical twist to creating active teams of pokémon which in turn will bring more depth to the battles.

The other major addition to the games is the ability to pair up your pokémon in battle for dramatic two-on-two encounters. What this means is that pairs of active pokémon will be able work in tandem, delivering combination attacks and enhancing each others abilities – this kind of doubling-up will open up a whole new layer of experimentation to the games.

As is tradition, the new characters in *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* – of which there'll be a male and female trainer to choose from – will have brand-new kit at their disposal. The Pokédex, for example, has been replaced by the Pokémon Navigator, a source of far more comprehensive data. Much like the Pokédex, the navigator will give you more information on all the individual Pokémon in the world. It will also give you more specific data on where you can find them.

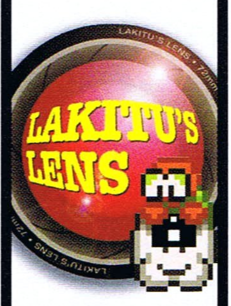
There's also a new feeding device called (snigger) the Pollock. In this you can store the different types of pokémon food you collect. The new pokémon games will feature more types of Candies and many more seed types allowing you to bestow more specific attributes, abilities and enhancements to your favourite pokémon.

Last but not least, *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* will support four-way link up, allowing you and three of your mates to do battle at the same time – sounds very hectic.

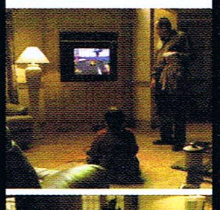




DID YOU KNOW? That in the Pokémon cartoons and movies, Ash Ketchum is voiced by a woman. The same woman who does the voice-over for his mother. How very Norman Bates…



DONKEY KONG MENTIONED ON CRIMEWATCH? MARIO GUEST STARRING IN THE SOPRANOS? LET LAKITU KNOW!





MAFIA 64

This month's slice of televisual gaming-idiocy comes to us courtesy of David Rabbit in Devon. Featuring mafia captain Tony Soprano – of C4's Sopranos fame – it shows him 'playing' *Mario Kart* with his son Anthony Jr, after taking a break from a hard day's work organising crime. As is the fashion with celebs and video-games these days, he manages to adopt a 'unique' playing style – using only one hand for the analogue and Z-trigger while ignoring the rest of the buttons altogether. What's even more impressive is that he managed to come in fourth at the end of the race. Without even accelerating. Genius.

WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

Entries sent with picture evidence will win a Gamecube game





BALDUR'S GATE

PC RPG brilliance makes its way to GC!

At long last, the action-orientated RPG based on the PC's finest role-playing series will be ported over to Gamecube.

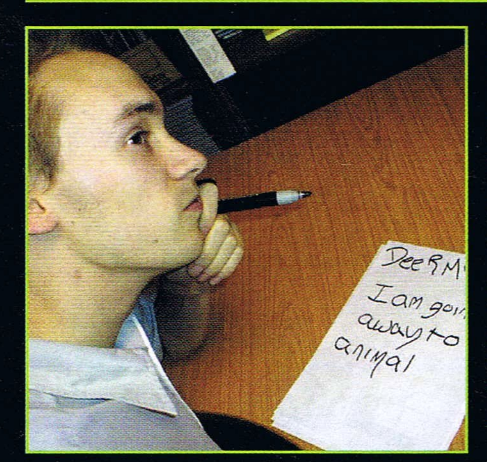
BG: Dark Alliance as it's known, was originally released on PS2 and has far more console-friendly *Gauntlet*-style gameplay. Choosing from three character types, players go through the whole money-collecting, weapon- and armour-buying and levelling-up business, but the overall focus is more about navigating dungeons and intense group combat.

Just like the PS2 version, there will be a two-player cooperative mode to keep you going through those winter nights.

VIRTUAL REALITY

NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.

THIS MONTH Leaving home for a new life in Animal Crossing…



THE TEST

Fed up with life in Wales, Geraint pens his farewell note: "I'll be a total stud pimp in Animal Crossing. The ladies just don't understand me in Wales, but over there I hear there are some real foxes. Literally."



RESULT

The train terminates at Paddington, not Animal Crossing, but Geraint gets the 'stud pimp' life he dreamed of. In a meths-fuelled hell on the streets. There's a moral to this, you know. Somewhere.

SHORT CUTS



DOKAPON DX AND LUPIN III

Japanese publisher Asmik Ace should have the battle RPG board game *Dokapon DX* available for die-hard importers right about now, which is probably a good reason for six, maybe seven people in the western world to get excited. Of slightly greater interest will be the same company's *Lupin III* game, which is based on a hugely popular comic series that's been translated into several languages and made into at least five movies. It'll be out in December.



WAR AND PIECE

Assuming this magazine is in your hands on 1st November, today's the day you can pick up Bandai's *From TV Animation One Piece Treasure Battle* on Japanese import. It looks very much like a *Powerstone*-style multiplayer fighting game. If you're not sure whether it's worth importing, you might see it in Gaming Planet in the not-too-distant future.

THE EYES HAVE IT

More *Zelda* gameplay details revealed.

There's still not much to go on, but Nintendo keep dropping intriguing hints ahead of *Legend of Zelda*'s projected December release date in Japan.

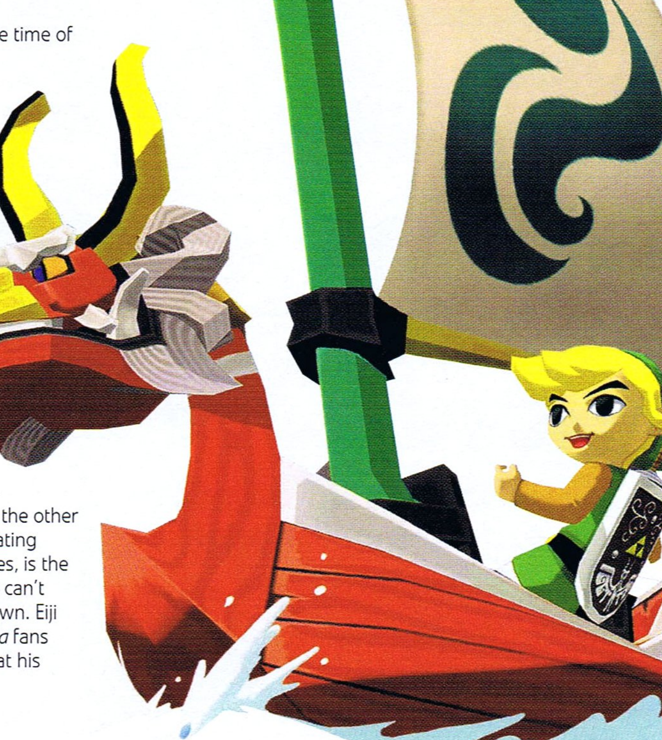
We'd previously thought that the game would be set in a different world to any of the other chapters, but as it turns out, the events take place during the 'lost' childhood years from *Ocarina of Time*. Several familiar characters will crop up, along with references to past and future events.

One unusual feature is the part the wind will play in puzzles. When sailing between islands you'll have to account for the direction it's blowing from. The wind changes according to the time of day (we'd imagine it's an *Ocarina*-style time progression rather than anything using the Gamecube's clock).

Link's facial expressions also have more than a cosmetic role. You'll get clues based on where he's looking and how he reacts to certain situations. The game's director Eiji Aonuma promises that it's a brand-new element for the series, not something that'll make things too easy. The GBA link-up, in which one player helps the other by moving a cursor and activating 'Tingle Bombs' to clear enemies, is the part designed for people who can't complete the game on their own. Eiji Aonuma insists hardcore *Zelda* fans won't be disappointed by what his designers have dreamed up for this most eagerly awaited Gamecube title.

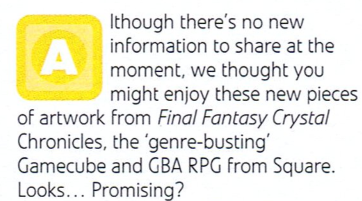


△ ***Zelda*. We are literally exploding with excitement. It's a messy office, indeed.**



FINAL FANTASY

Feast your eyes on characters and concept art from *Crystal Chronicles.*



Although there's no new information to share at the moment, we thought you might enjoy these new pieces of artwork from *Final Fantasy Crystal* Chronicles, the 'genre-busting' Gamecube and GBA RPG from Square. Looks… Promising?

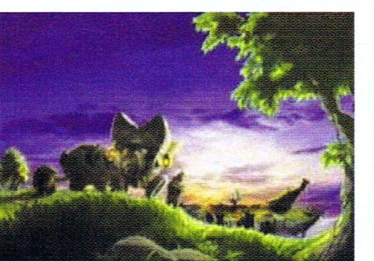
Reminiscent of the PSone *Final Fantasy IX*, mixing a cutesy fantasy style with more steampunk-based influences, this should at least be a distinctive looker. More details soon. Promise.



△ **Cute little fellas, ain't they? Awwww.**



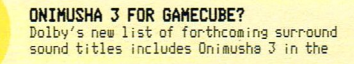
© Game Designer's Studio







© Game Designer's Studio



ONIMUSHA 3 FOR GAMECUBE?
Dolby's new list of forthcoming surround sound titles includes Onimusha 3 in the Gamecube section. The feudal Japan adventure sequel hadn't been confirmed by Capcom at the time of writing, but these industry lists do sometimes include info that hasn't been officially cleared for release by the company concerned. Sweet.

WATCH THE GAME
US Cubes now come with a disc filled with game footage, which is probably the next-best thing to an actual demo disc. Expect a similar promotion to arrive in this country eventually.

Q

WILL MOBILE GAMING REPLACE NINTENDO'S HOME CONSOLE BUSINESS?



△ Satoru Iwata – cheery fella, mop-like haircut, chubby cheeks. Huggable.



△ Mario – squat, red dungarees, likes to play around in filthy sewers. Unpleasant.

Will Nintendo abandon the console-manufacturing business after Gamecube has run its course? The possibility reared its head way back in **NGC**/70, after Nintendo boss Satoru Iwata declared: "The effort to produce machines with better technology has reached its limit."

More recently, Nintendo have reaffirmed their commitment to making great games rather than high-tech hardware, and Shigeru Miyamoto's claim that Gamecube could serve Nintendo's needs for a further six years or so may well be correct. Nintendo are certainly in no hurry to find a successor to the Gamecube.

But the industry is once again whispering about a possible change of direction for Nintendo, with the company's future hardware targeted at networks and the Game Boy brand rather than home gaming. The company is reportedly in negotiation with various potential hardware and software partners to develop a networked 'content delivery' system whereby games can be incorporated into communication technology and then downloaded to play on the move.

The team that designed Gamecube will be responsible for overseeing the new hardware, and specialists such as mobile browser firm Access will handle the networking stuff.

"IT SOUNDS LIKE NINTENDO HAVE SOME BIG PLANS FOR THE 3G MOBILE STANDARD"

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT...

It sounds very much like Nintendo have some big plans for the imminent 3G broadband mobile phone standard. The company is said to be preparing a 'major announcement' in November, the content of which remains a mystery, and we wouldn't be surprised if it's some sort of GBA-related news, with an updated, network-ready version of the handheld on the way.

So why would Nintendo consider scrapping home consoles at the end Gamecube's natural life?

It would be a disappointing move for Nintendo fans, but insiders have hinted to us that in the long term it's probably the only realistic option.

The immense cost of developing and selling a next-gen console means that unless a company has the limitless cash reserves of Microsoft or the market-leading brand of Sony, it's becoming too risky. Take PlayStation 3, due in 2005, for example – development of the central processor alone has a billion-dollar budget, and the console will have to match the PS2's success if it's to make any money at all.

Sony can afford to take the gamble. Perhaps Nintendo could as well, at least one more time, but it depends on the likelihood of Satoru Iwata taking such a chance as the new president of a venerable family business. Already he has had to issue a warning to the Tokyo stock exchange after analysts downgraded this year's expected Gamecube shipments from 12 million to ten million, and GBA shipments from 19 million to 15 million, knocking ten per cent off projected profits. The last thing he wants is to invest heavily in launching a new machine that underperforms, and go down in history as the man who sent Nintendo the way of Sega.

And what of the Nintendo software that truly defines the company? Will we be playing *Mario 128* on PlayStation 3? Or will Nintendo's own 'content-delivery' system, backed by the likes of Hitachi and NEC, become the de-facto standard for computer entertainment?

Watch this space – over the next couple of years things will get pretty hot for all three console manufacturers.

WHAT IS 3G?

The third generation of mobile communications, or 3G, is the new standard that allows data to be transmitted 100 times as quickly as current phones. While not as fast as home broadband connections, it's three times as quick as a 56k modem, allowing video and music to be streamed straight into your phone. Or Game Boy Advance version X, even. And not only will 3G's network of super-powerful antennas turn us all into irradiated mutants with X-ray vision, they'll also be able to pinpoint exactly where you are when carrying a 3G-enabled gizmo. So you could walk past McDonalds and have a temporary five-minutes-only voucher for a free milkshake beamed into your 3G PDA, right there on the street. Or you could nick a 3G phone from some drunk in a pub and find half of Scotland Yard waiting on your doorstep when you stumbled home. It's the future!

WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?
Xbox.com recently hosted the most cretinous piece of console one-upmanship we've seen outside of a remedial school playground, with a spoof ad for the 'Nottendo Lamecube'. Ho ho! For their next trick, the people responsible will mime bouncing an invisible basketball while attempting to chew their own ears.

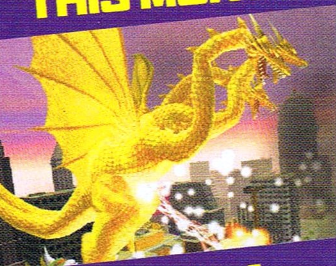
GAMECUBE'S A WINNER
Our favourite console has just won the semi-prestigious 2002 Good Design Award from the Japanese Industrial Design Organisation. Congratulations! Spookily, the N64 picked up the same award back in 1997.



NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS

IN REVIEWS THIS MONTH



GODZILLA
DESTROY ALL MONSTERS AND KNOCK DOWN CITIES P38



SEGA SOCCER
MANIC FOOTBALLING THRILLS WITH THIS ARCADE MADNESS P51



WHAT IS PAL?
PAL is the UK's broadcasting standard. When you buy a Cube here it will be PAL. When you buy a Cube in the US or Japan it'll be NTSC – a different broadcasting standard, and the reason the two don't mix. Import games are NTSC games.



STARFOX ADVENTURES

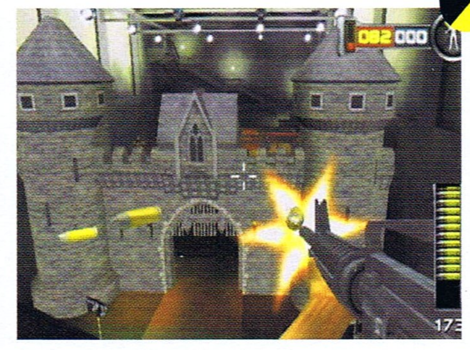
The definitive review of Rare's last game – is it an all-time classic or do they go out with a whimper? P28





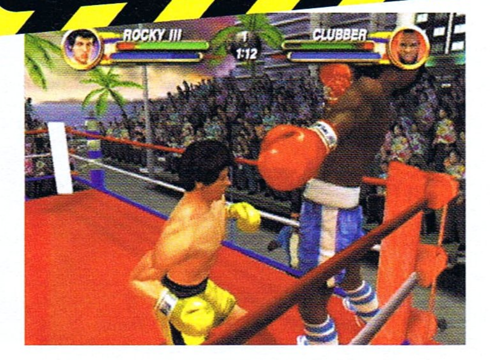
ETERNAL DARKNESS

Nintendo give *Resident Evil* a run for its money with their very own fright-fest. Spooktacular! P40



DIE HARD VENDETTA

Movie-based FPS thrills as you thwart German terrorists with guns and swearing. Topper! P54



ROCKY

Adrian! AAADRIAAAAAAAN! Smack Mr T and Dolph Lundgren about the ugly box as everyone's favourite bruiser gets Cubed. P52

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the biggest, most comprehensive on Planet Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you more detail than anyone else. And in the new **NGC** things have just got a whole lot better: our Field of Play and Event-o-meter regulars will pinpoint exactly when and where games get good, and yet our verdicts remain the most honest and most stringent around.



DOSHIN

Unbelievably, Nintendo's 64DD-based, quirky god-game gets a PAL release. Who'd have thunk it? **P58**



ANIMAL CROSSING

The American version gets a good going-over – and it's utterly brilliant. PAL release PLEASE, Nintendo! **P68**

1 GET INTO THE GAME

■ The quickest and smartest way to get started…





2 FIELD OF PLAY

■ The game's best bit taken apart and analysed…



3 EVENT-O-METER

■ The good bits, the bad bits – all in a handy graph…



4 THE SCORE BAR

■ The verdict explained for you…

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with plus and minus points.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure…

VERDICT

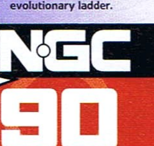
We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict on whether you should purchase a game.

+
■ Six disparate personalities.
■ Weaver's been killed off.
■ Constant stream of creative profanity and abuse.

–
■ Ugly, ugly people.
■ Less talent than Les Dennis.
■ Dabbling in the shallow end of the gene pool.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Wave Race
Nintendo
NGC/61 91%
Wetter than a very wet weekend in wet old Frome. Wet.



6 VISUALS
Never have you seen a messier and more offensive office, or more convincing morons.

7 SOUNDS
Gutter-mouthed rubbish, soothing Welsh crooning and peaty Irish grunts.

8 MASTERY
Six monkeys with typewriters couldn't do it. Seven, maybe. Definitely eight.

7 LIFESPAN
Great fun until the late nights and urine-flavoured tea take their toll.

VERDICT
NGC: Monkey Jigsaw is a masterpiece of magazine craft, despite the constituent parts looking like they're several steps down the evolutionary ladder.

NGC
90

5 OUR SCORING SYSTEM

■ What those scores mean to you…

NGC STAR GAME

0-24	25-49	50-74	75-89	90+
■ Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.	■ Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short of any quality.	■ Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.	■ Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.	■ Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is absolutely essential.

MEET THE NGC TEAM

With *Starfox* being Rare's last Ninty game, the team get all mixed up with some familiar faces…

Finger-painting: Bickola and Kitiface



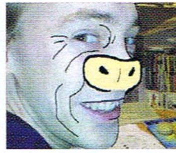
JES
Joanna Dark's funky new Xbox makeover got Bicksy all teary-eyed. "Such spiky hair", he sobbed. "You could kill with it".



JUD
Jud inexplicably mutated into hillbilly bear Banjo. "Paws ain't no good fer holdin' a Winchester", he drawled.



KITTSY
Martin's ape phobia manifested itself physically. "It could be worse – I could be Lanky Kong", he said philosophically.



GERAINT
Used to snuffling for truffles and rotten vegetables in the Welsh wilds, Geraint unsurprisingly became chimp-worrier Wizpig.



PAUL
Fittingly, Banjo-Kazooie's grunting shaman Mumbo Jumbo possessed Paul. He makes marginally more sense now.



DAN
"I imagine I get to be Hitler again. Thought so. From Rare's GBC title, Super Achtung Spitfire, no doubt. Hilarious, to be sure."





TIM
Tim found employment as one of Rare's 'friendly' receptionists. "No-one here wants to speak to you", he said cheerily.



LAURA
*Laura was not best pleased at becoming loathsome rodent Pipsy Mouse. "F****** b***** c***" was all she had to say.*



MAYO
"I've always had a 'thing' for Jet Force Gemini's Vela", grunted lumbering man-beast Tom, "if you 'know' what I 'mean'".







△ When the camera gets close to Fox, the impressively fuzzy fur effect comes into play. It makes him look super-soft.



△ When you administer the final blow to a SharpClaw soldier, there's a blinding flash of light as he fades away to wherever it is that dead dinosaurs go. Future generations will dig up his fossil and wonder why it has bits of stick embedded in the skull.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	RARE
PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Fox's great water effects and realistic hair will be dropping jaws on 22nd November.

COST: £40

STARFOX ADVENTURES

The years of waiting are over! Fox, Peppy, Slippy and the gang finally take that trip to Dinosaur Planet…



GET INTO THE GAME

Prolong the life of Fox's footwear from the start of the game.

WHERE IT'S AT

After Krystal's brief appearance, the first thing for Fox to do is find the staff she dropped onto the planet's surface. It's over by the stone structure on the same side of the river as the Arwing. Then you have to chat to the queen dinosaur, buy something sweet for the hideous Warp Stone, and you'll be up and running, on your way to saving the universe once again.



Three-and-a-half years in the making. Starting as the N64's unreleased *Dinosaur Planet*, it took a long vacation from the public eye in order to get a fully Starfoxed Gamecube makeover. And now that it's actually here, the big question has to be whether it has improved with age, or whether it's already a bit stale.

Starfox Adventures begins with Krystal, a furry blue animal who is unfortunate enough to run into the evil General Scales as she 'roams the galaxy in search of answers'. Following a brief shoot-'em-up and a look around the General's impressively rendered flying galleon, Krystal's playable role ends as a prisoner on the fabled Dinosaur Planet, where Scales' SharpClaw army has visited chaos and misery upon the peace-loving reptilian citizens. Without her magical staff,

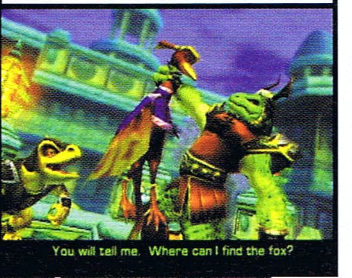
Dinosaur planet revealed…

STATUS BARS

Fox's health and magic energy are displayed here. Each use of the staff's powers reduces the magic meter, and most enemies take off a quarter of a shield every time they land a hit.

ENEMIES

The evil General Scales is apparently the bad guy behind all of this. His soldiers don't do anything to enhance his fearsome reputation, but they do look quite cool in their combat gear.



You will tell me. Where can I find the fox?

FOXY

Although the fur effect is only noticeable in cut-scenes and extremely close camera views, its swaying softness is a wonder to behold. Videogames have never looked so cuddly.

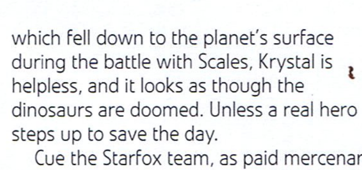


Whoa! A Krazoa Spirit! But how do I get mine in there?



DINO TALK

Want to talk like a Dinosaur Planet native? Put on your best regional accent (Cornish works well for us), swap your vowels and consonants according to the chart in the game manual, and start with: Clancy juoj olohoedo nacc tao! It's just like those little secret code watches we used to use to write rude messages on the blackboards at playtime.



which fell down to the planet's surface during the battle with Scales, Krystal is helpless, and it looks as though the dinosaurs are doomed. Unless a real hero steps up to save the day.

Cue the Starfox team, as paid mercenary Fox McCloud takes the bait (the promise of large amounts of cash), accepting the mission to recover the four Spellstones and six Krazoa Spirits that will bring the shattered planet back into equilibrium and free the lovely Krystal. Can Fox locate the missing staff? Does an Arwing pilot have the hand-to-hand combat skills to defeat an army of fox-eating lizards? Are the lesser members of the Starfox team still as hopeless as always? Will Peppy and Slippy finally 'get it on'?

Time for an adventure of epic proportions… Maybe.

"So similar to *Zelda*, it could almost be a fur-filled offshoot of Link's escapades"

THE BIG STICK

It's a staff of many talents, you know…



FIRE BLAST

The most basic staff power is a red energy bolt that can be used for everything from puzzles to combat. Shoot it at the little targets dotted around dungeons and you'll open a door. Shoot it at a bad guy and he'll be history a lot quicker than if you just beat him around the head.



GROUND QUAKE

Shakes everything up and knocks down most enemies. It's the only way to remove the big critters that sit in the craters of Moon Mountain Pass, and once upgraded will take care of the big dinosaurs in the Walled City. It makes the awful 'protect the eggs' minigame a breeze to finish.



MR LIFTO

If you spot some little green arrows on the base of a boulder, that's where you can insert the staff to lever the thing up. Pump the A-button to lift the rock, and little money beetles will scurry out. The planet is awash with them, so you'll never be short of cash for more than a minute.



DISGUISE

Once you've acquired this stylish upgrade for your staff, you can turn into a SharpClaw dinosaur. It means other SharpClaws won't attack you, which is just as well because you can't fight at all when you're a dino. Certain switches on the floor can only be activated while disguised.



FREEZE

An icy blast of coldness is just the thing for dousing flames when a platform you want to stand on is a bit hot. Most flames you can just walk through, but some have invisible barriers until they're put out. You can also use it to freeze some enemies before you give them a spanking.



△ When Fox sees the imprisoned Krystal, the sax music of lurve starts to play.



△ Fox releases a Krazoa Spirit at the incredibly large and empty Krazoa Temple. After the sixth time you do this, you'll be ready to face the game's final boss.

LOOKS FAMILIAR

If you've played the magnificent *Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, you'll know exactly what Rare were trying to accomplish with *Starfox Adventures*.

Structurally, it's so similar to *Zelda* it could almost be a fur-filled offshoot of Link's escapades. For example, the sacred items needed to unlock the next area and increase your own powers are found in puzzle-filled 'dungeons', where you push blocks, shoot at torches, and defeat enemies to open 'life force' doors.



"STARFOX ADVENTURES SETS ITSELF UP FOR A HEAVY FALL BY BEING SO HOPELESSLY UNORIGINAL"

The combat system and controls include lock-on targeting, automatic jumping, and those little somersaults that Link does. Fox even makes the same noises when he does them. And, come to think of it, there's a remarkably familiar eight-note chime after completing certain puzzles.

Extra supplies or items are purchased from a shop, but you won't be able to buy some of the best stuff until you get a bigger purse to carry your money. Fall down a hole in the ground and you enter a shimmering grotto, complete with soothing 'faerie' music and some sort of special item to collect.

You can also plant seeds in special patches in the ground, and they'll eventually



WHAT THE FOX? There are 21 species of fox – the largest being the Red Fox, and the smallest the Fennec fox, which is only 20cm tall. In reality, foxes cannot operate light spacecraft or fight with staves.

FOX'S CURIOUS HABITS

When you're stuck on a strange planet, it's your actions that make you the fox you are. Chasing chickens and tearing up bin bags will have to be put on hold, for now…



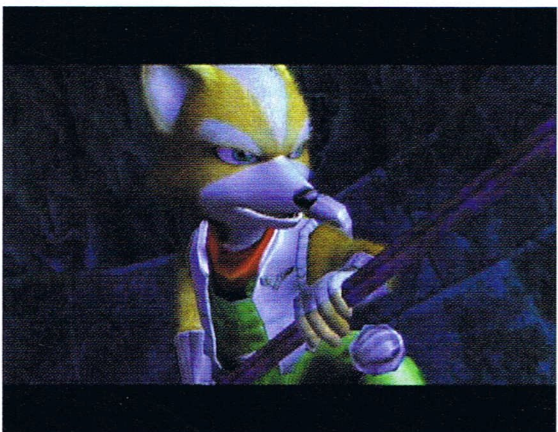
BARTERING
"You pay this much," whines the shopkeeper. Okay, we will, if it means we don't have to listen to you over and over again just for the sake of saving a tiny amount of money (that can be found under every rock anyway).



SLIDING
Being a fox, our hero isn't the fastest at getting up ladders. Getting down, however, is a different matter. Just press A and watch as Fox spreads his legs and goes for the friction burn. Neato, as Tricky might say.



CHATTING
When Fox is in a pickle, the Starfox team will pitch in with useful advice and abominable voice acting. Slippy is the best. He's a talking tipster who sounds like Mickey Mouse impersonating Michael Jackson. Badly.



STAFF TROUBLE
Krystal's magic staff fell onto Dinosaur Planet, a place she had never previously visited. Luckily for Fox, it's the key to almost every door and puzzle on the planet. How does that work then?



UNHELPFUL
Their planet is on its last legs, with bits of it floating away into space, and they're all going to die a horrible death. Fox is the only one who can help them. So why won't they cooperate? "Bring me a gift!" Stick it up your…



BLOCK PUSHING
Fox might have borrowed this from a certain pointy-eared pixie boy, but at least he knows how to drag blocks sideways as well as shoving them forwards and backwards. Work those muscles, Fox!

grow into vines, which will give you access to new areas.

Fox's health is represented by a line of quartered pieces of heart – sorry, shield – which gets upgraded after finishing a dungeon. Underneath that, there's a magic meter which also gets upgraded (inside a grotto, of course).

Listing it all like this (there's a whole lot more besides) might seem a tad unfair when you consider that *Ocarina of Time* remains one of the finest games ever created. But *Starfox Adventures* sets itself up for a heavy fall by being so hopelessly unoriginal, and the sad truth is that after so many years in development the game stumbles a disappointingly long distance from greatness.

WHAM, BAM

It's technically very polished, but just too brief and uneventful to be anything other than a throwaway, one-weekend experience. We finished it in 15 hours, and at no point during that time did we see a single spectacular scene, or even the most fleeting moment, that could class *Starfox Adventures* as the top-of-the-range action-adventure we always hoped it would be.

There are only two proper bosses, for heaven's sake, both of which fell at the very first attempt. A third boss is just part of a quick on-rails shooter, where all you can do is keep a targeting cursor hovering over him until he dies. And the fourth is lifted almost move-for-move from a certain N64 game.

Not *Zelda*, this time.



THE HORN
Fox's musical prowess is limited to two special items, used to call certain types of creature. The dinosaur horn summons a mammoth (only when used at a specific place) and the flute is used to calm birds that we suspect are distant relatives of Banjo-Kazooie's Jinjos.

So that's your lot as far as giant bad guys go. No nerve-wracking battles against overwhelming odds. Just a few minutes of running around (without so much as the slightest concern that you might face defeat) and a bit of rather tedious shooting.

The main overworld is fairly large and very linear, so there's a great deal of legwork to be done. Getting specific items or opening doors often involves collecting an item from one area and transporting it right across the other side of the planet, without the aid of any sort of transport or time-saving warp device. If you pick up something in the east and it has to be taken to the west, you really do have to walk the entire way. Of the 15 hours we got out of the game, it

"There are no loading pauses anywhere"



This is the level where you get the flute for calling the birds, as well as the disguise that turns you into a SharpClaw.



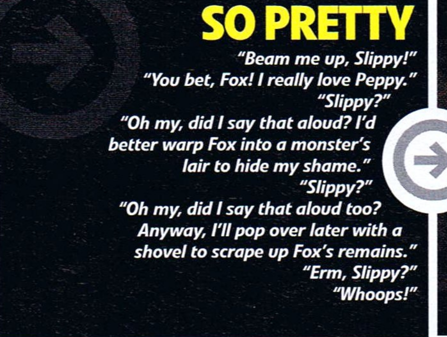
The best combo is the one that finishes with Fox twirling the staff like a majorette's baton, cracking the bad guys on the chin.

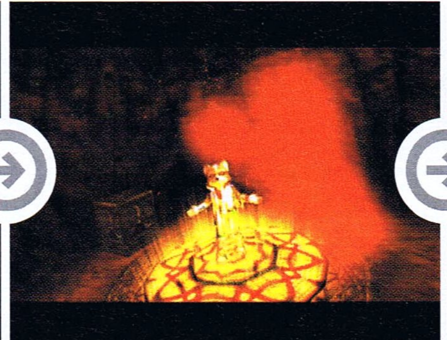


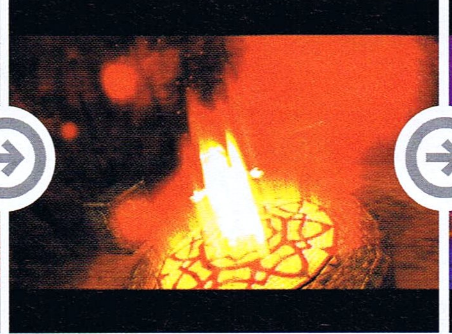
The quickest way to finish the two racing sequences is to get your speeder bike in front of somebody else's and block it until it explodes. Otherwise you'll have to deal with mines being thrown out by the leaders, and a battering from the ones that manage to get close enough.

SO PRETTY

"Beam me up, Slippy!"
"You bet, Fox! I really love Peppy."
"Slippy?"
"Oh my, did I say that aloud? I'd better warp Fox into a monster's lair to hide my shame."
"Slippy?"
"Oh my, did I say that aloud too? Anyway, I'll pop over later with a shovel to scrape up Fox's remains."
"Erm, Slippy?"
"Whoops!"











felt like we spent four or five simply travelling from one place to the next, with nothing to do except admire the same bits of scenery.

And even this is much more annoying than it should be, because of the countless petty hazards along the way. For example, mushrooms that spray poisonous dust taking a quarter of a shield every time you walk past. Or cackling bats that keep swooping down to take another quarter shield unless you can be bothered to stop and swipe at them with your staff – at which point you've got about 20 seconds until they regenerate and have a go at you again. Why do they exist? They're not at all difficult to avoid (give the mushrooms a very wide berth, or keep stopping when the bats attack) but dealing with them is no fun at all.

Once you've realised that health power-ups or (Dumbledang Pods in *Starfox* speak) are so plentiful, you need never die even once during the course of the game, you'll just plough straight through every hazard you encounter, simply to save time. Fire traps in dungeons; barrels bouncing down slopes; freezing water that you're not supposed to swim across; irritating little things that pop up and shoot gobs of shield-sapping stuff every few seconds… There's no point expending the puny effort it takes to get past such uninspired traps the 'right' way because (a) if you can be bothered to 'defeat' them, they always regenerate anyway; and (b) there are crates filled with Dumbledang Pods around every corner. More Dumbledang than you ever dreamed of. And that stuff regenerates too.

Perhaps one of the reasons there's so much walking is because there are no

> **"OF THE 15 HOURS WE GOT OUT OF THE GAME, WE SPENT FOUR OR FIVE JUST TRAVELLING BETWEEN AREAS"**



LIGHTS

There are a couple of very dark rooms in the game, and you won't get very far in them unless you can shed a bit of light on the situation. That's where fireflies prove their worth, floating around for a short time while casting a very attractive glow that will guide you through the pitch darkness.

NGC FIELD OF PLAY

A typical *Starfox Adventures* puzzle in two easy steps...

DIG IT, TRICKY

That curious crack in the snow... Tricky's staring at it... He keeps getting a big question mark above his head... He even says, "There's something here, Fox!" Could it be a clue? Check Tricky's menu and, indeed, the Dig option is enabled. Very sneaky.

GOTCHA!

After crawling through the tunnel Tricky made, and beating up a couple of SharpClaws that were imprisoned in the cave, Fox can use the staff to unlock an item box. Inside there's a key that will unlock the leg irons on one of the mammoths outside. This 'wow, look what I've found' animation gets a bit tiresome after the hundredth time.

loading pauses anywhere, at least not that you'd notice. Areas with a lot of architecture are linked by relatively featureless corridors and mazes, which seems to be where the game does its loading. You'll be weaving your way through a loooong bit of nothingness as a routine part of your travels, when you might notice a slight hiccup in the frame-rate. That was the loading pause. Now that's quite a technical achievement, but we'd rather have had warp zones and loading bars if it meant a little less tedium.

Unsurprisingly, there's a lot of fighting to be done. Fox locks on to enemies automatically, so there's no need to press a button when you fancy a scrap. It means you can't walk past

CARTOGRAPHY

You don't get a map for any area as standard. Instead, you have to purchase them for a small sum from the shopkeeper, which isn't really much trouble. But if you'd rather save the cash you can get by perfectly well without a map. It's very hard to get lost in the game.

"Fighting involves nothing more than hammering the A-button"

ANIMAL ARMY

Not everything on Dinosaur Planet is hostile. Just most things…








TRICKY

You're lumbered with Prince Tricky right at the start of the game, and there's no losing him, even if you run. His noble dinosaur blood is needed to unlock a certain door, but sadly that doesn't mean you get to sacrifice him.

MAMMOTHS

These lumbering beasts were stupid enough to become extinct, but Fox needs their help – not least because one of them will teach Tricky to breathe flames, thus delaying the moment when Peppy will fire him from the Great Fox's torpedo tubes.

RIDE 'EM!

Grab yourself the curly dinosaur horn and give it a sharp toot when you see a curly dinosaur horn pad. One of Fox's mammoth mates will show up to provide an unusual means of transport, which is the only way through a blizzard.

GALLOP

If mammoths aren't exactly the speediest animals to ride, don't worry because there's something better later on. This triceratops is only used for bashing a handful of rocks, but you can ride him round in circles as much as you want.

FLYING FOX

Free a giant bird and you'll be airborne in no time at all. You can't control the direction of the bird's flight. It just follows a boss, while you move a cursor around the screen to chip away at its health. Not the most involving scene, really.



△ **You can throw a ball for Tricky. Fetch!**



△ **Mind the sticky canyon walls here.**



△ **We remember fighting this boss on the N64 version at E3 2000. Looks a bit nicer now he's on Gamecube, and he makes a decent noise if you're hooked up to a good sound system.**



△ **Cherry-blossom time on Dinosaur Planet.**



△ **Wonder what Tricky has seen now.**

anything hostile when you're carrying the staff, but you can always stow it in the backpack when you don't want the hassle of battling foes.

FIGHT CRUD

Not that it takes any skill. Although pressing the R-button blocks incoming blows, you never, *ever* need to use it. Even when facing five enemies at once, the only one that actually attacks is the one Fox is focused on. The others stand and wait their turn. Beating any of them – absolutely any of them – involves nothing more than hammering the A-button. Just bash away while holding up, down, left or right depending on the finishing move you'd like to see after Fox has done his combo. There are no other fighting controls. We beat one scene, a fight against multiple enemies that was billed as a test of our combat skills (with a Krazoa Spirit as the reward), while on the other side of the office, facing away from the TV, checking our emails with one hand, tapping the A-button on a Wavebird controller with the other.

Additional Krazoa Spirit tests included bashing the A-button to turn a large wheel, sort of like a one-button *International Track & Field*, and guessing which cup that playful little spirit had hidden under.

> **BEATING ABSOLUTELY ANY OF THE ENEMIES INVOLVES NOTHING MORE THAN HAMMERING AT THE A-BUTTON**

When you consider that getting the Krazoa Spirits forms more than half of the game's main objectives, it's easy to feel cheated by this.

There are several other minigames, such as the speeder



PAIN CLOUDS

The mushrooms dotted around the main hub area are a bit of an irritant. Walk too close to one and it sprays poisonous red dust. You could always shoot them to stun them long enough for you to squeeze past, but there are loads. Anyway, health is not a precious commodity here.



TALK TIME! The hilarious regional accents were all done by noted Animal Magic presenter Johnny Morris, and the guy who played the dog in Look Who's Talking Now. Danny DeVito. Honest. Yes, he'll do.

INSIDE... DINOSAUR PLANET

Fighting, flying, and exploring a temple, the *Starfox* way.
See how we kick ass and chew gum, both at the same time…



Four hapless SharpClaw dinosaurs, kitted out in layers of body armour and carrying enormous weapons, prepare to get a severe and fairly humiliating whupping from a fox armed with a stick.



"Hai-*ya!* Take *that!* And *that!* And have a bit of *this* too!" The SharpClaws might stand more of a chance if they didn't hang around waiting to be annihilated one by one. But not much more.



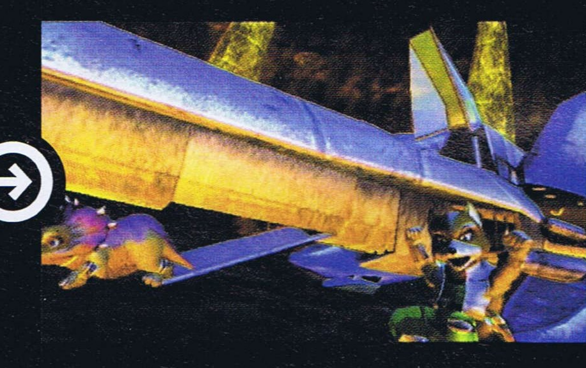
"Last one to fall over is a big girl's blouse!" They seem in an almost indecent hurry to prove themselves among the worst fighters in gaming history. Mash that button…



Apart from being a lethal martial arts expert, Fox's main talent is his skill as an Arwing pilot. It's his means of transport between the main planet and the four bits that are floating in space.



You have to fly through a set number of gold rings during the course of the flight. It's harder to fail in these sections than it is to collect all the rings. We died once when we got stuck inside scenery.



The best part is when you've flown all the way through and arrived at your destination, which means you won't have to endure another tacked-on flying sequence for a while.



The beautiful water temple in all its liquid glory. There are some great pillars made of water here, and when you walk behind them Fox goes authentically ripply. Sweet mother of Mike!



It isn't very big, though. You have to drop off two Spellstones here, and the second time around you'll just repeat the same four, very basic puzzle rooms with minor variations.



Here, for example, you have to shoot a block so it slots into a particular position. Okay once, but you wouldn't want to be asked to do it again. You will be, of course.



"Tricky is the game's Jar Jar Binks"



△ Definitely one of the visual highlights. The watery water of the temple is a delight.

Curse these foolish arms!



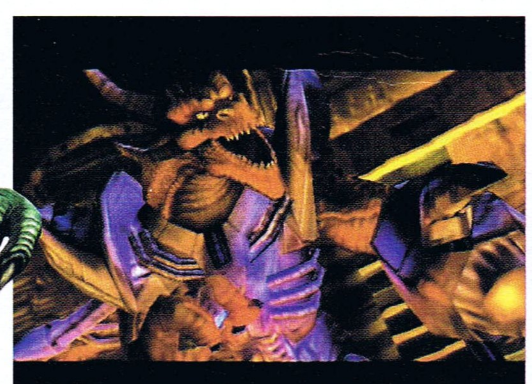
△ Zap him with the electro-pads, then blow him to bits.



△ One of the trickier bits – avoid the flames.



△ These crystals grow everywhere, and are used to top up your magic meter. You can get magic meter extensions, too.



△ Look – it's Stripe from Gremlins!



△ Shame you can't at least dismember them.

bike sections (which aren't good) and the tiny Arwing levels (which suffer from the same problem as the rest of the game, in that there's no degree of difficulty at all).

You have a dinosaur companion, Tricky, at almost all times. He seems to be there to make things even simpler, by flashing a big question mark over his head whenever there's something only he can do, like dig for a buried item or light a fire. Basically, he's a replacement for Link's fire arrows and thirst for exploration.

TOUGH LOVE

You really do have to try hard to find much to get excited about in *Starfox Adventures*. It's such a nice-looking game, with excellent water effects, impressive fur on the non-lizard characters during the cut-scenes, and a smooth frame-rate almost everywhere. But it's far from the *best*-looking game on the console, or something you'd particularly want to show off to your friends.

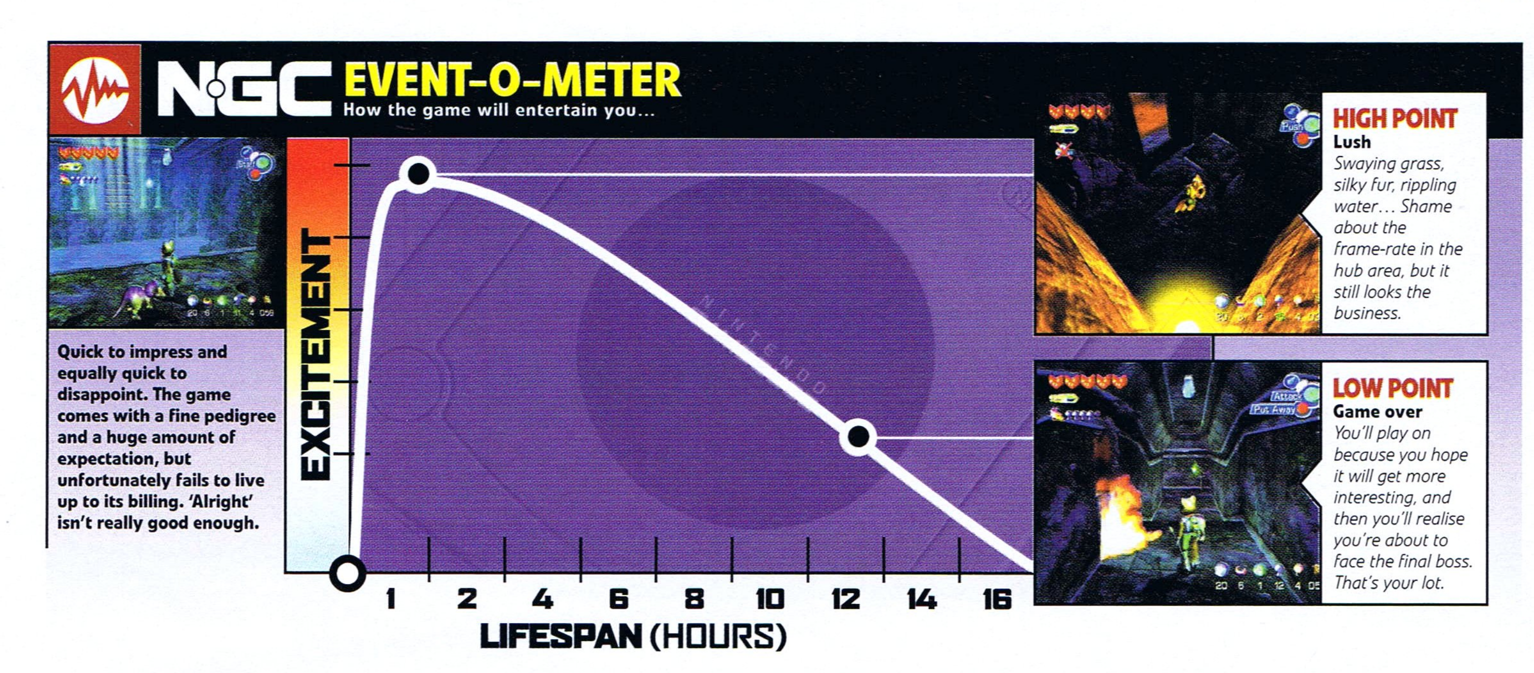
There are plenty of different locations and environments to appreciate for their colourful design, but they're mostly devoid of anything you'd actually want to *play* more than once.

You'll meet loads of characters along the way, but they'll put themselves right at the top of your hate list as soon as they open their mouths and wail pointlessly in chronic UK regional accents. Even the members of the Starfox team don't sound right – as if they have heavy colds, or they're Starfox



BOMB DADDIES

In the unlikely event that you do get killed at some point in the game (it will probably be a mushroom or a bat that nicks your last bit of health) you can be resurrected if you're carrying a thing called a Bafomdad. You can hold up to ten at once, and you'll find more of them than you can carry.





- Lovely graphics.
- No loading.
- Lots to see.
- Varied action.



- Tedious walking.
- Rubbish bosses.
- Diabolical voice-acting.
- No standout moments.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Ocarina of Time
Nintendo
NGC/24 98%
See how it's supposed to be done. How it *was* done. Four years ago.



9 VISUALS
Like *Jet Force Gemini* in high-resolution. Technically excellent.

6 SOUNDS
The music's alright but the voices will have you tearing your hair out.

6 MASTERY
Skilfully coded, but there's more to mastery than just that.

6 LIFESPAN
Not much replay value, apart from trying for a 100 per cent rating.





△ Strange cloud formations show a portal is open.



△ It's another shoot-'em-up section, this time operating the cursor from the back of a lumbering dinosaur.

impersonators rather than the real deal. And as for Tricky, well – you can't shut him up. He's *Starfox Adventures*' Jar Jar Binks, constantly whinging about something in his American kid voice, or saying things like,

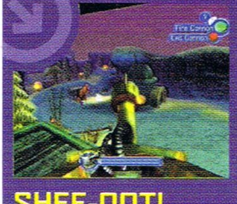
> **"STARFOX IS SO BLAND IT MAKES YOU WONDER WHAT RARE HAVE BEEN DOING FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS"**

"Whoa, cool!" when you open a door or beat yet another heavily armed, thoroughly stupid enemy.

While it's rarely a poor game, *Starfox Adventures* is so bland and flavourless as to make us wonder exactly what the developers have been doing with it for the past three-and-a-half years. It certainly wasn't anything like adding innovative new features or expanding an N64 concept to fit Gamecube. It's thoroughly competent and very well programmed, but when you can play through a 15-hour adventure without seeing a single moment that makes you think 'I wish I could see that again' or even 'well, that was cleverly done', there's plainly something wrong. You could always go back to repeat the Arwing levels for high scores, if you wanted to, and since it doesn't save after the final (predictably disappointing) boss, you can have another crack at that whenever you like. You could even try to get a 100 per cent completion rating by finding all the bonus items. But you simply won't want to do any of that unless you're desperate to believe that *Starfox* actually has any degree of substance beneath its visual gloss and technical sorcery.

It's worth renting for a weekend, because that's all the time it will take to complete it and see what little it has to offer. But compared to the game it so shamelessly apes – in fact, compared to almost anything truly great – it's a bit of a letdown.

MARTIN KITTS



SHEE-OOT!

You won't find these enemy cannons very often, and this is the only scene where you actually get to battle using one. The turret rotates to set the direction, and you hold the A-button to set the distance. It fires explosive shells which can blast straight through boarded-up doors.

VERDICT

Not actually bad, but after all the waiting this comes as a huge disappointment. We wanted a classic, we got plain ordinary.







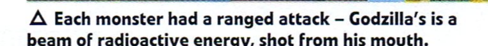
REVIEW UK

"Giant monsters beating the crap out of each other"



△ Ooof! That's got to hurt – a three-way rumble between Godzilla, Megalon and King Ghidorah. Our bet's on the fella with the three heads and wings. Surely that's got to be an unfair advantage?

△ Each monster had a ranged attack – Godzilla's is a beam of radioactive energy, shot from his mouth.



△ Giant vicious winged beast ahoy – meet Rodan, one of the more dangerous opponents in the game.



△ Godzilla beats the living crump out of MechaGodzilla. Not bad for an overgrown iguana with a knobbly back.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	PIPEWORKS
PUBLISHER	INFOGRAMES
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
RUMBLE FUNCTION	YES
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT? It's in the shops now, yes it is. Now, now, NOW! Cough.



COST: £40

GODZILLA

DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE

Up from the depths! Mean, green and thirty stories high, Godzilla and friends get ready to rumble…

Tired of fighting yet another identikit *Street Fighter* wannabe? Then *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* may just be for you. If you like knocking down skyscrapers by hurling twenty-storey monsters at them, that is.

> **"IT FOCUSES ON THE SPECTACLE OF GIANT MONSTERS BEATING THE LIVING CRAP OUT OF EACH OTHER"**

Based on the old Toho Godzilla films – which featured men in rubber suits rather than the CGI trickery of the Hollywood remake – this doesn't pretend to offer a hardcore alternative for those whose fingers have long since fused into nimble combo-splicing flippers (although there are combos aplenty and a goodly number of moves). Rather, it offers an experience that focuses strongly on the insane spectacle of giant monsters beating the living crap out of each other. And let's face it, that kind of thing is always going to be fun.

There's a welcome variety of modes to indulge in, from the single-player Adventure to the pleasingly named Destruction, so there's a lot to dip in and out of. And this is what you'll find yourself doing most with *Godzilla* – each beast has an entertaining number of moves, and the ability to shatter the surrounding scenery, *Blast Corps*-style, is great fun. But it doesn't offer enough incentive to keep you addicted for long periods of time – you'll find yourself returning to the game for a quick cathartic burst of knockabout fun, and the four-player scraps are a novel diversion from *Timesplitters 2*, if you can and your chums can drag yourselves away from that.

Godzilla is by its very nature a slow and lumbering game, lacking the finesse and depth to really hook you, and entice you to develop your skills as a more 'regular' beat-'em-would. There are a lot of monsters to unlock, though, and much of the game's charm comes from people playing as their favourites from the old movies – just don't expect a *Smash Bros* beater.

JES BICKHAM



- Multiplayer laughs.
- Lots o' monsters.
- Plenty of modes to indulge in.

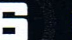


- Lacks depth.
- Slow and lumbering.
- Some jerky animation and movement.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Super Smash Bros Melee
Nintendo
NGC/68 95%
Astounding Nintendo scrapper. Tip-top!





6 VISUALS
Chunky beasts and good arenas make up for the lack of detail.



6 SOUNDS
Assorted roars, screams and croaks – plus plenty of explosions.



6 MASTERY
Doesn't push the Cube, but multiplayer is nicely implemented.

6 LIFESPAN
Hardly life-consuming, but a great party game and jolly good fun.

VERDICT

Nostalgic monster-battling fun, perfect for five-minute blasts but lacking the depth to make it a must-have scrapper.





"Fear that creeps up on you like sciatica on old ladies' legs"

SANITY
This green tube is the sanity meter, and if it starts to get low on fluid then you can expect one or two nasty surprises. At times it seems a bit of a gimmick, but there'll be moments when it completely catches you out.

TORCH
Although all the characters will carry some kind of weapon, the torch is often the best object to have when you're exploring gloomy interiors. Apart from lighting the way and alerting you to the presence of lurking horrors, it can be used as an impromptu weapon to fend off attackers until you find something more potent.



INVENTORY
Every character can carry all the objects they find, so there's none of that inventory-swapping nonsense you'll find in Resident Evil. It's also possible to save the game at any time (unless there are monsters in the vicinity), which makes for a more 'friendly' game.



MONSTERS
The game's atmosphere and creatures are heavily influenced by the work of HP Lovecraft. He was an eccentric horror writer from Rhode Island (where the Roivas mansion is, funnily enough), who penned most of his work in the 1920s, and many say he genuinely believed in a race of alien monsters called the Old Ones that inhabited the earth aeons ago. He didn't get invited round for dinner very often.

RUNES
The runes have typically mystic names, such as Redgormor, Narokath and Mrboombastic (you get the picture). Cleverly, each rune that you use in a spell appears on the ground and is uttered by the character you are currently controlling. The voice-acting throughout is magnificent.

ETERNAL DARKNESS

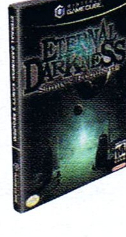
Children screaming, blood dripping from walls and constant hallucinations… all part of a day's work in *Eternal Darkness.*

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	SILICON KNIGHTS
PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	15
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES

WHEN'S IT OUT?
It's ready and waiting in the shops now. Whispering to you. Calling you. So go and get it. Now.

COST: £40

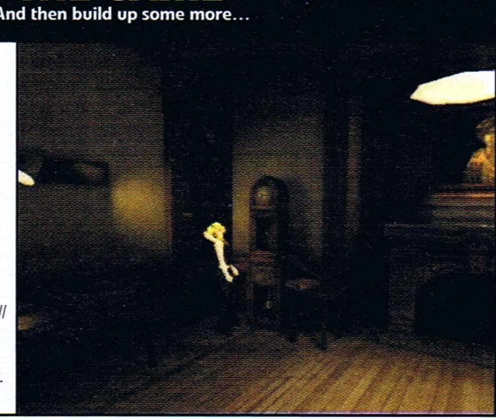




GET INTO THE GAME
Let the fear build up. And then build up some more…

A GOOD TRADITION
You begin the game in Alex Roivas' grandfather's mansion. Anyone who's played a Resident Evil game will be right at home here. You even get to solve a classic clock puzzle in the first five minutes.

TURN A NEW LEAF
Find the Tome of Eternal Darkness in the study and it will propel you on a strange and compelling adventure. All clues and information will be recorded in the book and Alex's grandfather will even offer a few tips.





Have you ever been scared? *Really* scared? Not the kind of jump-out-of-the-seat fright you might get from watching a horror movie or opening your last tax bill. But the kind of insidious fear that creeps up on you like sciatica on an old lady's legs. You see, there's two kinds of fear in the world: the kind that slaps you in the face like a demented fishwife, and the kind that builds up over a period of time, layering on tension until the mind collapses in on itself. Broadly speaking, *Eternal Darkness* avoids the easy shocks you'd experience in *Resident Evil* and opts for the latter option. And believe us, play Nintendo's survival horror title alone at night and you may as well reschedule laundry day.

Eternal Darkness is a strange and unique game for many reasons, and the chances



BEASTLY BESTIARY
Once you take on the role of Maximillian Roivas, an 18th-century doctor, it's possible to perform amateur autopsies on creatures to find weaknesses. These are then added to the Tome of Eternal Darkness and can be accessed by all future characters. It's a neat touch, and one that really helps to add texture to the overall experience.

WRITE ON! *Eternal Darkness* is heavily influenced by the writings of Howard Phillips Lovecraft, a sickly hermit-like proto-geek from Rhode Island who wrote stories about 'unnameable terrors' and didn't get out much.

INSANE IN THE BRAIN

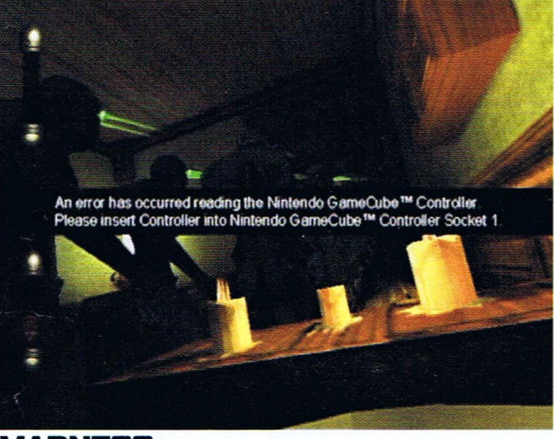
You'll meet some truly horrible fiends on your travels. Some will scare you to the edge of insanity…



CAMERA
Because the Eternal Darkness world has been generated in glorious 3D, the camera angles can tilt to increase your sense of dread.



METAMORPHOSIS
When your character's sanity gets particularly low, he might even turn into one of the beasties he's been avoiding. Which is nice.



MADNESS
But it's when the sanity meter hits rock-bottom that you've really got to worry. Our advice: don't believe every message that appears on screen…



SEEING THINGS
Hallucinations are commonplace when the sanity meter gets low. You may even walk into a non-existent room and hear children. Screaming.

are that in years to come it will be singled out as a defining moment for videogame narrative. While it has a plot that's about as credible as Darren Day's cockney accent, it's the way it's been constructed that really impresses. The closest example we can hit upon is the old, eccentric British cartoon, Mr Benn. In that series the eponymous hero would go into a fancy-dress shop, and find that when he tried on a particular costume it would transport him through time to the period that matched the clothing. He would even bring back a souvenir to prove that it hadn't all been some drug-addled fantasy.

TOME TO DIE

Eternal Darkness is structured along similar lines. You begin by playing Alex Roivas, a young woman who is trying to unravel the mystery surrounding the violent death of her grandfather in his Rhode Island mansion. The ancient house is the hub from which all your adventures begin, and early exploration of the house will uncover an evil book called the Tome of Eternal Darkness. Reading individual chapters of this grimoire will send you back through time to take on the role of someone inextricably entwined in the book's history, and eventually, you'll discover what led to the demise of Alex's

> "PLAY THIS GAME ALONE AT NIGHT AND YOU MAY AS WELL RESCHEDULE LAUNDRY DAY"



TARGET PRACTICE

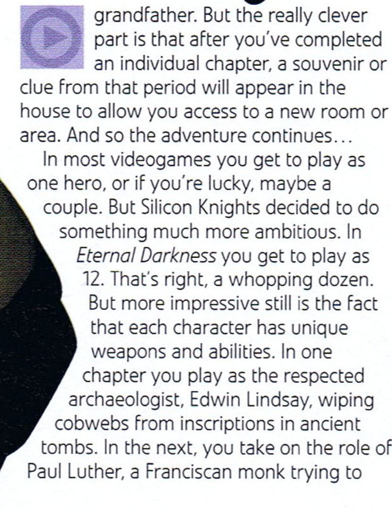
Though the targeting system in the game is novel, it can take a little time to get used to, especially when several creatures attack at once.

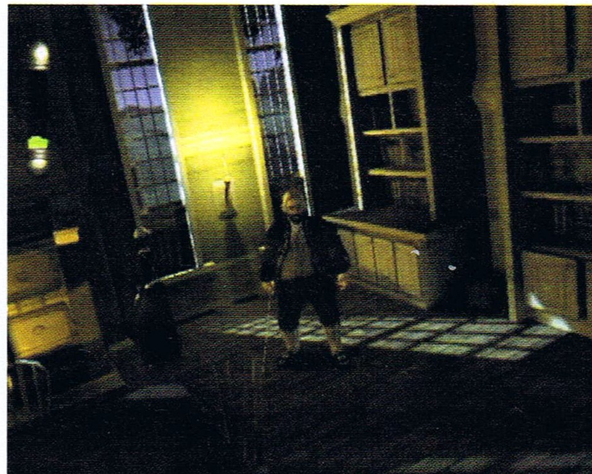

Press the R-button and you'll lock on to the nearest creature. Parts of the body can then be highlighted by moving the C-stick around.


Going for the head is usually the best option, but you can cut enemies down limb-by-limb if you want to be really vicious.


Once your foe is prone on the ground, you can perform a special finishing move, just by pressing the B-button. This also boosts your sanity meter.






Δ Just look at these lighting effects – absolutely gorgeous. The use of shadow and light is used superbly throughout to add to the creepy mood.



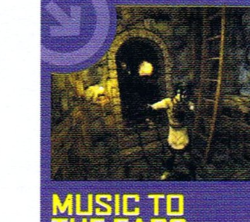
grandfather. But the really clever part is that after you've completed an individual chapter, a souvenir or clue from that period will appear in the house to allow you access to a new room or area. And so the adventure continues…

In most videogames you get to play as one hero, or if you're lucky, maybe a couple. But Silicon Knights decided to do something much more ambitious. In *Eternal Darkness* you get to play as 12. That's right, a whopping dozen. But more impressive still is the fact that each character has unique weapons and abilities. In one chapter you play as the respected archaeologist, Edwin Lindsay, wiping cobwebs from inscriptions in ancient tombs. In the next, you take on the role of Paul Luther, a Franciscan monk trying to prove his innocence of a grisly murder. The pacing of the game is perfect. Each chapter takes up to one hour to complete, which means you never get bored. Just when things could conceivably slow down, you'll be thrust in a new direction – fighting off the undead in Roman times, or investigating a temple in Cambodia. As more chapters of the book are unlocked you'll soon be completely engrossed in the story.

A MEASURE OF MADNESS

Which brings us neatly on to the game's most audacious element – the sanity meter. There are things in the world that can send anyone insane: deep, cloying darkness, solitary confinement, or the price of sandwiches in motorway service stations. But what *Eternal Darkness* does really well is inject the survival horror game with a sense of dread and foreboding at every turn. Each character has a sanity bar that goes down whenever a diabolical enemy attacks. As the meter drops, strange and unnerving effects take place. These effects have been superbly woven into the fabric of the game, and they really help to keep you on edge.

But it's when the sanity meter plummets to its lowest ebb that you have to be most on guard. It would be unfair of us to spoil your 'fun' by illustrating all of the effects that will see you smiling and grimacing in equal measure. Let's just say we were absolutely terrified when a horde of undead attacked just when a message flashed up on screen explaining that the controller in controller port one had become disconnected. Best not believe everything this game displays, because it will truly begin to mess with your mind.

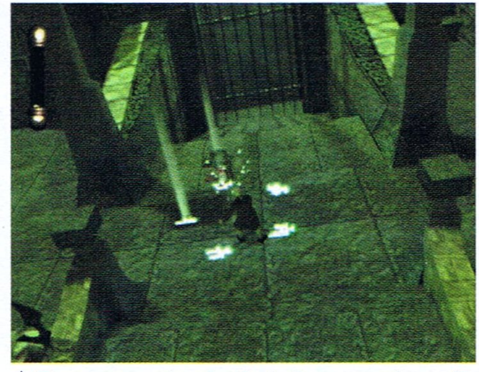


MUSIC TO THE EARS

Although it's impossible to communicate the quality of the sound in Eternal Darkness through images, it's worth mentioning that the creepy noises, murmurings and screams heard through the Dolby Pro Logic II system are brilliant. You really start to feel as if sound is emanating from all sides. And inside your head.



△ Casting spells of a certain alignment produces the corresponding runes on the floor. It's a really nice detail.



△ There are many boss battles in the game and you will have to use all your protection spells to soldier through.



NGC FIELD OF PLAY

Keep your wits about you, or you'll never solve any of the puzzles…

FRIENDLY CLUES

Whenever you come up to an object of interest, the B-button will flash up on screen to indicate that you can interact with it in some way. This means you don't have to wander aimlessly around looking for a needle in a corpse-stack.

PUZZLETASTIC

Expect plenty of puzzles involving ancient stone keys and statues. None of them will threaten to disturb the insides of your brain too much, but they do add impetus to the storyline.

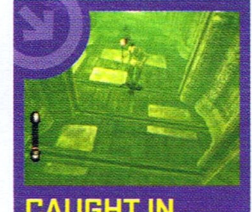
TRY TO STAY CALM…

There is, however, some respite from the nasty effects you will experience in the game. Cleverly, the sanity meter can be topped up by slaying creatures that threaten you. Every monster will have a weakness and a targeting system has been implemented so you can attempt to hit one particular region of an enemy. Once you've got a creature prone on the ground, you can finish it off by pressing the B-button. Every creature you banish will improve your mental well-being, and keep some of the more unnerving sanity effects at bay.

Indeed, one of the finest aspects of the game is that it feels perfectly honed and balanced. Those who get frustrated by having to leave objects in storage crates or conserve ammo in *Resident Evil* will be pleased to hear that there are no such restrictions here. Each character can carry everything they find and they all possess a slashing weapon, so if you do run out of ammo (unlikely, because you get plenty) there's always an alternative way to fend off the monsters. Even the sanity meter can be topped up by using a spell, so you never feel frustrated. True, there are some imaginative puzzles in the game, but none of them will have you scratching your head for long. Although some might complain that the game is a little too easy, that's rather missing the point. *Eternal Darkness* is about clever plotting, building up tension, and delivering a well-constructed yarn. And if you're into those sorts of things then you'll definitely get your money's worth.

The only real weakness in the game is the combat, which at times can be a little on the clumsy side. Although there's a novel targeting system, you'll often find the best strategy is just to go for the head anyway. Sometimes, you may find the camera fails to keep up with the action and on one or two occasions you may even find yourself fighting

"ONE OF THE FINEST ASPECTS OF ETERNAL DARKNESS IS THAT IT'S PERFECTLY HONED AND BALANCED"



CAUGHT IN A TRAP

Edwin Lindsay will have to negotiate many dangers in the Cambodian temple. These include dart guns, swinging scythes and gas. In truth, the pitfalls get a bit annoying, so it's best to watch your step to avoid as many as possible.



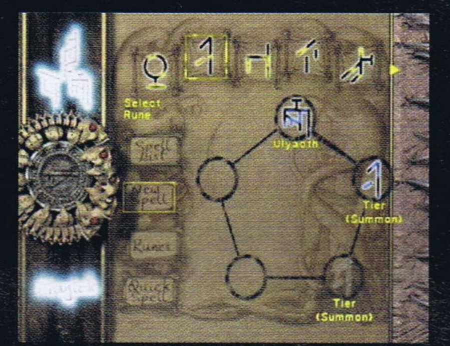
RIGHT ON! Fear-induced hallucinations are produced by the right side of the brain, which also controls your ability to make intricate sculptures from mashed potato, like Richard Dreyfuss did in Close Encounters of the Third Kind. Yes.

IT'S A KIND OF MAGICK

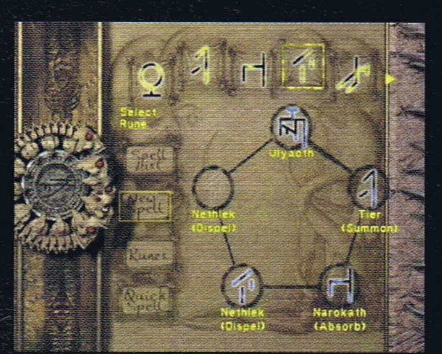
The magic system in *Eternal Darkness* may look complicated, but Silicon Knights make sure you're never confused by leading you through the system step-by-step.

A GUIDE TO SPELLCRAFT

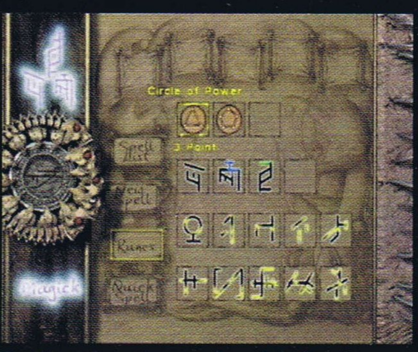
Each spell is made up of symbols called runes. By combining runes together it is possible to cast ever more elaborate spells. This page shows all the runes you have collected on your travels. You won't be able to cast spells until you discover the Tome of Eternal Darkness, but once this is found all spells will be transferred from one character to another.



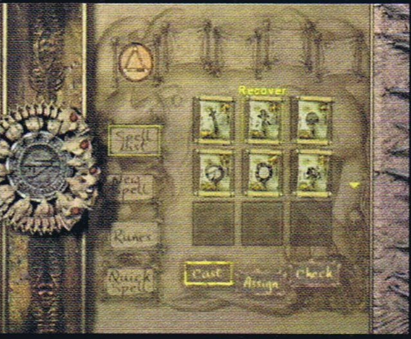
To make a spell, you simply choose New Spell from the options screen. Now you're ready to begin concocting some incantations with which to bash monsters.



Now select an alignment for your spell. If you want to dispel a magic ward, for instance, you will have to choose an alignment more powerful than the one encountered.



Scrolls and parchments found during the course of your journey will give you rune combinations for spells. But you can always just try and construct your own.



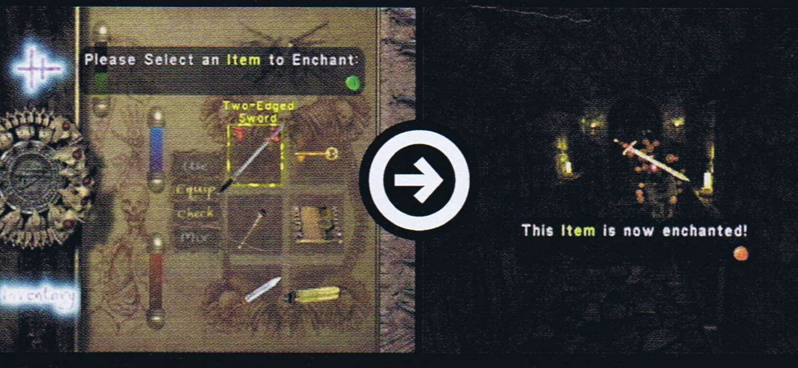
Once you become more familiar with the system, you can even assign your favourite spells to the D-pad for quick access. Handy if you get caught short by a Xel'lotath zombie.

SPECIAL SPELLS DEMONSTRATED



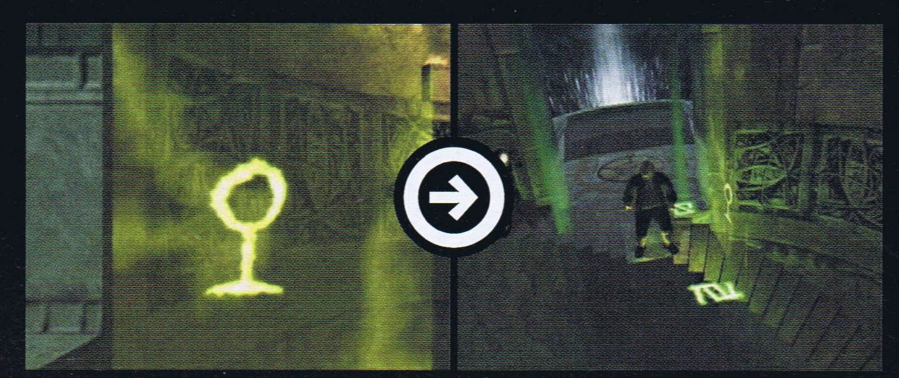
SHIELD

Prevent nameless fleshy monstrosities from getting their dirty claws/feelers/tentacles on you by casting this blue protective sheen around yourself.



ENCHANT ITEM

Just like Viagra, you can treble the potency of your weapon with this very useful spell. This'll see enemies sliced into neat fillets of monster beef before you can say 'wah'!



DISPEL

Many barriers, both physical and supernatural, will block your progress in the game. Cast Dispel to break wards of a magical nature.



SUMMON TRAPPER

Trappers are spider-like creatures that you can summon and control. They may even come in useful for solving one or two puzzles in the game…

Less of the sane? Creepsome horror adventuring with a twist…

NGC EVENT-O-METER

Invest in some fresh pants before putting this one in the disc tray…

Things start off in typical survival-horror fashion – haunted house, reading memoirs, finding secret passages, and so on. But once you start to play through the different chapters found in the Tome of Eternal Darkness you'll be hooked.

EXCITEMENT

2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18

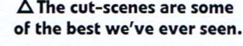
LIFESPAN (HOURS)

HIGH POINT
Working out
Solving puzzles in the game is hardly taxing but they are satisfying. Once you unlock a new chapter, you can't wait to see what happens next.

LOW POINT
Start again…
Getting badly injured means you'll have to hobble around slowly. Sometimes it's better to restart from your last save point.







△ Alex's ancestor, Maximillian Roivas, foolishly decides to investigate noises coming from the cellar. One of the game's greatest features is that you control 12 characters.

△ The cut-scenes are some of the best we've ever seen.

DOORS OF PERCEPTION

Not all doors are what they seem. Even though you may have been through some before, the sanity effects can transport you to a new, horrific location. Going back to places you've already explored with a previous character may seem like lazy design, but it adds a sense of texture to the adventure.

monsters off screen. The finishing move can be equally troublesome, because each character goes through a set animation sequence which then leaves them vulnerable to attacks from nearby creatures – and there's nothing you can do to defend until the sequence has ended. But these are niggles in what is otherwise an incredibly polished package.

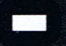
And if you're wondering which to get: *Resident Evil* or *Eternal Darkness*, then our advice is to search your inner feelings. Both are brilliant, but in different ways – to lump them both into the same survival horror category would be simplistic. Let's put it this way: do you prefer The Evil Dead or The Exorcist? Scary Movie or Ring? Much depends on whether you prefer knockabout schlock horror or creepy, insidious flicks with boss-eyed women climbing out of wells. Of course, if you're filthy rich then you can always just get both. But don't come running to us when your sanity slips and you start to scrawl things like 'BEHOLD THE EYE OF VECNA!' on your bedroom wall…

MARK WALBANK

> **"THE GAME'S ONLY REAL WEAKNESS IS THE COMBAT SYSTEM, WHICH CAN BE A LITTLE ON THE CLUMSY SIDE"**



- Brilliantly structured.
- Drips atmosphere.
- Satisfying puzzles and set-pieces.



- Clumsy combat.
- Sanity effects can sometimes annoy.
- A bit too easy.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Resident Evil
Capcom
NGC/72 89%
Better visuals than *Eternal Darkness*, but the story is a bit naff.



8 VISUALS
Superb surroundings, but the monsters could be better.



10 SOUNDS
When the Pro Logic II effects kick in you'll feel real fear. In your pants.

9 MASTERY
A magnificent genre-pushing game early in the lifespan of the GC.

8 LIFESPAN
About 15 hours to complete – but a very eventful 15 hours.

VERDICT
Although there are rough edges, *ED* is likely to be one of the most inventive narrative games you'll play in a long time.





"The solid aspects are outweighed by the problems"



△ From a distance the courses look lovely. And while they're not bad up close, they're not the most beautiful tracks ever seen by man.



△ The multiplayer is reasonably smooth.



△ The cars skid in a very uniform manner.



△ That water doesn't look quite so good when it's moving.



△ All your 'favourite' cars are present and correct, including the ever-blue Subaru. And others.

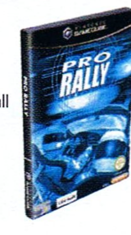
PRO RALLY

Let's off-road! As a famous man once said. Alternatively, you could bore yourself to death with *Pro Rally*.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
RUMBLE FUNCTION	YES
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT? *Pro Rally* is available to purchase in all good stores right now.



COST: £40



Rally games are often solitary pursuits. Given that, as single-player experiences, they're focused on the simple pleasures of time-trialling rather than jostling head-to-head with a pack of rubber-burning jalopies, there's plenty of memorising corners, plotting routes and racing on your own. *Pro Rally* is no different, aside from a perfunctory two-player mode tacked on the end, and is perhaps more demanding than most due to some irritating detection problems that stop your car dead, *Wipeout*-style, whenever you hit a barrier or clip the sharp edge of a corner. Either that, or you're tipped head-over-exhaust. It's hugely annoying.

In fact, there's a lot of annoying things about *Pro Rally*. The compulsory training sections, which although helpful in instilling some sense of careful driving and car-upgrade savvy, are so unremittingly strict that clipping a roadside cone elicits the dread heading: Failed.

> **"THE TRAINING SECTIONS ARE SO STRICT THAT CLIPPING A CONE ELICITS THE DREAD PHRASE: FAILED"**

There's more – the floaty handling, for instance, or the way you have to press B to continue, although you automatically stab A and retry whatever you were doing – which is a shame, as there's a basically solid game in here. The analogue acceleration and braking are well-implemented, and there's a definite appreciation of the ebb and flow of a track when you've mastered manipulating the shoulder triggers. Visually, the game looks cleaner than many of the multi-console ports we've seen, and runs consistently smoothly, unlike *SSX Tricky* or *Tony Hawk's 3*. But the solid aspects of *Pro Rally* are outweighed by the problems, and it's all a bit dull and unexciting at the end of the day. There's little incentive to better a given time, and even the wealth of engine/tyre/widget-tweaking options can't rouse sufficient interest. Best wait for *Colin McRae 3.0*, we reckon.

JES BICKHAM



- Full of options.
- Plenty to do.
- Runs smoothly, even in multiplayer.

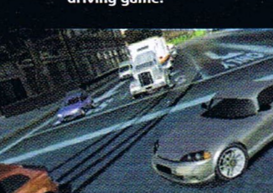


- Quite dreary.
- Terribly unexciting.
- Frustrating collision detection.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Burnout
Nintendo
NGC/67 86%
Utterly great tarmac-based racer. GC's best driving game.





6 VISUALS
Nicely presentable surroundings but blocky old cars.



6 SOUNDS
Shouty navigators, puttering exhausts, headachey tunes.

5 MASTERY
Aside from the smooth frame-rate, this could be a hi-res N64 game.

5 LIFESPAN
There's plenty to do but you'll be bored long before the end.

VERDICT
Technically competent and capable of gratifying speed, but riddled with flaws, and it's simply not very exciting at all.









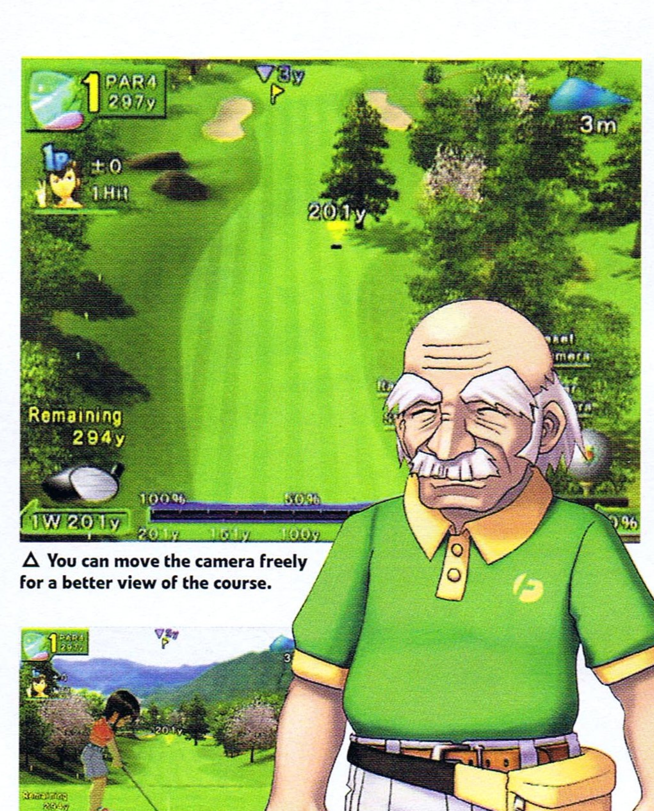
The yellow icon in the right-hand corner shows the path your thumb takes over the C-stick.



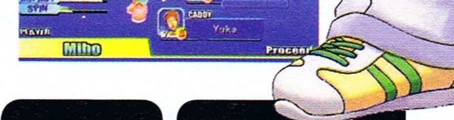
A straight swing will hit the ball cleanly…



…sending it crashing through the trees!



You can move the camera freely for a better view of the course.



ACE GOLF

Get wood! It's Eidos' club-wielding, ball-bashing beauty…

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	TELNET JAPAN
PUBLISHER	EIDOS
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	10
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Ace Golf will be out on the shelves of the shops on the 15th of November.

COST:
£40



This is quite nice. Not brilliant, not bad – just *nice*. Like a nice cup of tea. Despite golf games not really being that high on our agenda, this turned out to be a competent, highly enjoyable – not to mention relaxing – piece of software.

It might look overly cute on the visual front, but that's no bad thing. The front end is simple to navigate and everything is very well explained, making it nice and easy to get into. The actual courses are delightful – everything is clean and crisp, and you can move the camera around freely to get a good idea of where to place your shots, while the weather effects and seasons add a sweet touch of variety to the proceedings.

As far as the golfing is concerned, it's well reproduced, striking a good balance between playability and hardcore simulation. It's not an out-and-out sim, but it's not as simplistic as it appears, either, demanding a little more skill than you might expect – sitting in a niche somewhere between *Mario Golf* and more serious renditions like dads' PC games such as *PGA Tour*. The way you use the C-stick to gauge power and accuracy (pull it back and push forward to whack the ball) is balanced by the introduction of various accessories, unlockable caddies and special clubs that can be used to enhance your golfer's abilities. There's also a great levelling-up facility that rewards extended play.

> "IT'S IN A NICHE BETWEEN MARIO GOLF AND MORE SERIOUS DADS' PC RENDITIONS, SUCH AS PGA TOUR"

Last but not least, there are some tricky – and strangely addictive – minigames and challenges to help boost the game's longevity, as well as the all-important multiplayer, which makes for a pleasurable evening's entertainment. The only truly grating aspect of the game are the repetitive voice samples of your caddy, but that's about it. A great little game that deserves a place in anyone's collection – even if you don't even like golf that much.

GERAINT EVANS



- Simple to learn, tricky to master.
- Loads of unlockables.
- Nice presentation.



- A little too basic for golfing purists.
- Irritating, repetitive caddy voices.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Mario Golf
Nintendo
NGC/34 90%
An oft-negelcted Nintendo classic – worth picking up.

7 VISUALS
Basic, plain, and rather cutesy – but it's all nice-looking enough.

6 SOUNDS
Forgettable tunes and some truly annoying voice samples.

7 MASTERY
It's not exactly pushing the boat out, but it does the job very well.

7 LIFESPAN
Minigames, unlockables and an entertaining multiplayer.

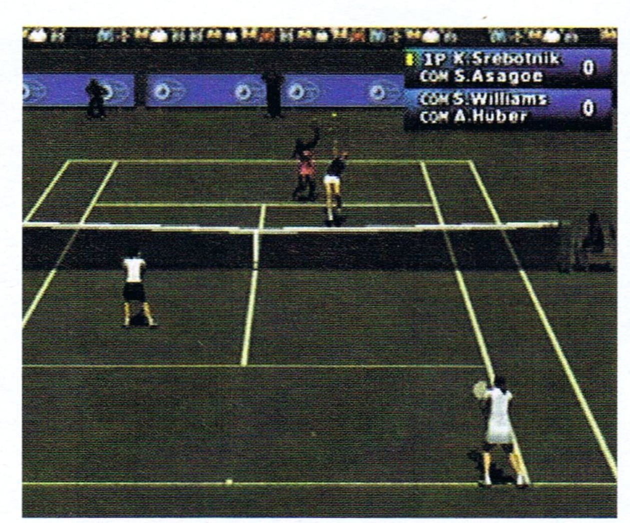
VERDICT
A golf game mightn't be your top priority, but this is still an enjoyable title that doesn't put a foot wrong. Mmm… nice!



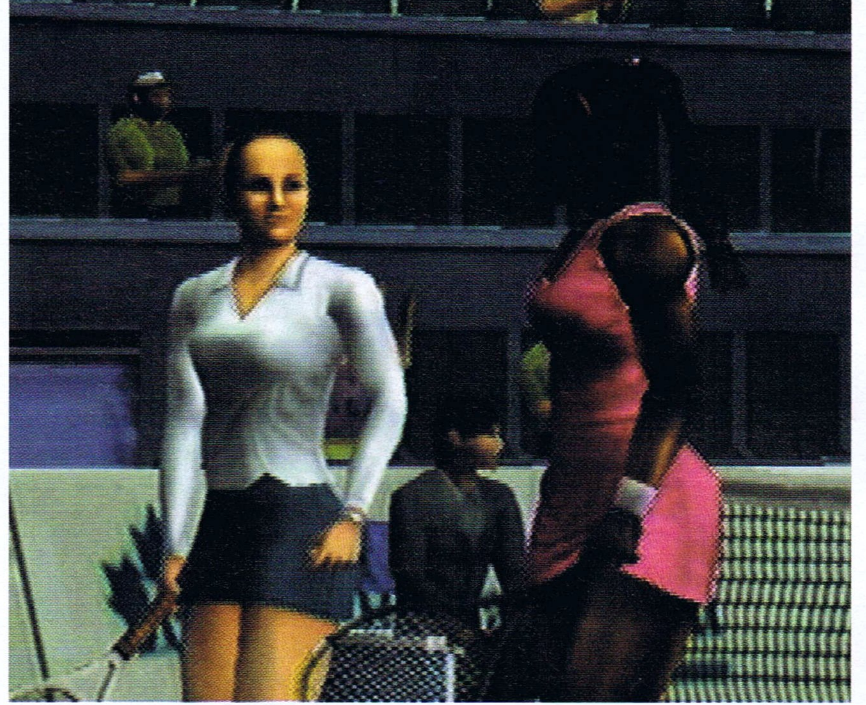




"Indistinguishable from run-of-the-mill tennis sims"



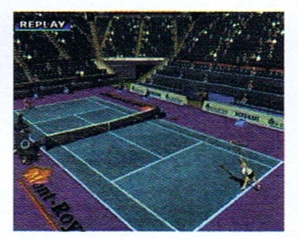
△ A bit of a mix-up between the doubles partners, as Serena prepares to 'smash' Anke's head. History in the making here, we'd say.



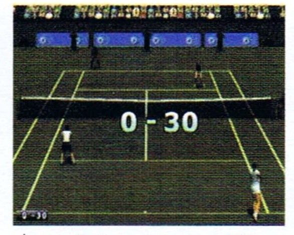
△ When they're not glamming it up in front of millions of viewers, grunting and sweating for the pleasure of the armchair fan, the girls pump iron in a bid to develop beastly man-arms. Well done.



△ It's the match-up the gaming public had been waiting for.



△ An empty arena is testament to our enduring tennis skills.



△ Aim it right at her head for maximum comedic effect.



△ Our favourite view in all the whole wide world.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	KONAMI
PUBLISHER	KONAMI
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
This one should be sitting pretty on your local shop's shelf exactly now.

COST: £40





PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR

New balls please! Gamecube's first tennis sim serves a double fault and cusses the umpire's tarty lipstick.

Tennis for ladies? Not that you can tell the difference here. The attributes of the women's game, such as less power and a higher skill level, haven't been incorporated into *Pro Tennis*, leaving a game that's indistinguishable from any run-of-the-mill tennis sim.

Of course, you get the dubious pleasure of facing up to such beauties as Lindsay Davenport and Serena Williams rather than ubiquitous sap Tim Henman, but the *WTA* licence is entirely cosmetic.

It's a bit short on game modes, too. No, make that *very* short on game modes. There are none of the minigames and training options that usually get crammed into these titles, leaving only a tour, an exhibition and a custom tournament to mess around with. That's slack work compared to most other tennis games.

> "THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE WOMEN'S GAME, SUCH AS LESS POWER AND MORE SKILL, AREN'T INCORPORATED"

There's the usual selection of four types of shot, implemented without the panache of *Virtua Tennis* or the immediacy of *Mario Tennis*. It's quite sluggish, and the players make some very strange moves, usually swinging a good half second after you've pressed the button, or occasionally missing what seems like an easily reachable ball. It's also quite easy – to beat the computer, all you need to do is keep knocking the ball back into play until you get a high, smashable return, then thwack it into oblivion when it bounces.

The graphics are typical tennis game fare, which makes us wonder why this sort of thing never has characters as impressive looking as, say, *Resident Evil* or a decent fighting game. After all, there's a maximum of just four players to draw at any time, and the court and ball physics haven't advanced since the SNES era. Strange.

It isn't all dull, though. One feature we enjoyed a great deal was the way the players' heads snapped back in the slow-motion replays after getting hit in the face by a wayward serve. Maybe that's the power of Gamecube at work. Have some!

MARTIN KITTS



- The only tennis sim on Gamecube.
- Four-player doubles mode.



- Very familiar.
- Few game modes.
- Nothing particularly new here.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Mario Tennis
Nintendo
NGC/47 91%
Unrealistic? This is how a tennis game should be done.



5 VISUALS
Cardboard crowds, spooky faces on most of the players.

4 SOUNDS
Not nearly enough grunting, considering it's women's tennis.

2 MASTERY
It doesn't even have proper analogue control. Gah!

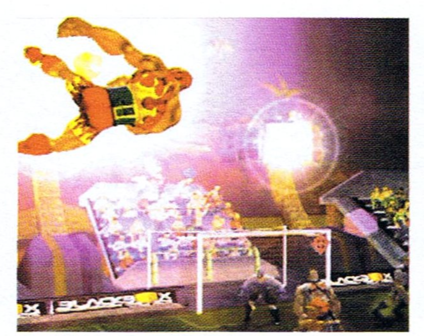
5 LIFESPAN
No 'crazy' bonus games to keep you interested for long.

VERDICT
Unremarkable in every way, but worth a look if you're a tennis stalker who's banned from attending games these days.






The characters are well animated. Pity about the crap comedy voices.


One crazy special effect coming up – what's the betting he's just about to score, eh?


You'd never see Ipswich doing this. Unless they'd been overdoing the hot sauce.


You just know that this bloke is a comedy Scotsman, don't you?



Just like *Red Card*, *Sega Soccer Slam* features plenty of special combos and a slo-mo shoot move.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	BLACK BOX
PUBLISHER	INFOGRAMES
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	5
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Sega Soccer Slam will be at your local games emporium as of now, if you please.



COST: £40

Can you kick it? Fast, furious and nutrition-free, Sega's latest offering is definitely a game of two halves…

It's a tricky one, alright – how many comedy football games do you need? Midway's *Red Card* would appear to already have the market sewn up – it might have laugh-out-loud, wince-inducing tackles but it's also a darn good football game in its own right. *Sega Soccer Slam*, on the other hand, is played purely for laughs, with grotesque cartoon characters, tiny pitches and three-a-side teams. Is it worth getting if you've already got *Red Card*?

On balance, we'd say… *maybe*. It's coded by Sega (along with Black Box games), after all – a sign of quality and an assurance of smile-inducing gameplay. But even if the game does play fast and loose with its definition of soccer, if you take it as simply a frenzied, fun-filled knockabout then you won't be disappointed. Obviously the aim is to score goals, but the small pitches and emphasis on physical violence mean that matches soon become hard-fought melees – and with special moves and special effects galore, there's never a dull moment.

> "THE EMPHASIS ON PHYSICAL VIOLENCE MEANS MATCHES SOON BECOME HARD-FOUGHT MELEES"

Unless you're playing on your own, that is. Because, you see, *Soccer Slam* only really comes alive in multiplayer. Finesse and strategy are surplus to requirements, and in the hectic pell-mell of a four-player scrum this lack of depth isn't an issue. Trudging through the main tournaments, though, becomes a chore without friends to laugh with and shout at, and even the admirable additions to the PAL version of the game, such as a smattering of new minigames and teams, do little to enhance lifespan. It is, however, most pleasing that European gamers have been treated with such decency – this is more complete than the US version of the game.

Ultimately, *Sega Soccer Slam* is a shallow affair, but it's colourful, vibrant and plenty of fun in the right situation; just don't expect another Sega classic. It's no *Monkey Ball*.

JES BICKHAM



- Hectic, fast, never pauses for breath.
- A great multiplayer knockabout.

–

- Shallow.
- Single-player mode gets tedious.
- Not for footie purists.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Red Card Soccer
Nintendo
NGC/71 78%
'Proper' soccer game, with some very painful tackling.



7 VISUALS
Wonderfully animated and genuinely colourful – all very Sega.

6 SOUNDS
More comedy regional accents than Rare would shake a stick at.

6 MASTERY
Fast and always smooth but otherwise not testing the Cube at all.

5 LIFESPAN
If you've got chums for regular multiplayer bouts, change this to 7.

VERDICT
A fast and fluid mutation of 'real' football, good fun in multiplayer but less so for the lone gamer. Not quite classic Sega.





"Against a human opponent, *Rocky* comes into its own"



ROCKY

Mickey says: "You're going to eat lightning and you're going to crap thunder!" Okay, maybe not…

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	RAGE
PUBLISHER	RAGE
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Rocky will be out on the 22nd November over here – or the 13th on US import.

COST: £40

This month's other movie licence turned out to be a pleasant surprise and, like *Die Hard*, it's done an admirable job of ensuring it captures the spirit of the movies it's based on.

From the word go, you get everything you'd expect – a montage of clips from the films, with all the old favourites from the soundtrack blaring out. There are fitting, well-used in-game speech samples, and all the classic sluggers who were in the movies – and some who weren't – appear. In fact, the presentation of the whole package is pretty much spot-on. The fighters are all well animated and their likenesses are good, while the ability to unlock more movie clips is a nice bonus. The only problem with the presentation are the arenas themselves – while they're more appealing than those of most other ring-based fighters available on Gamecube, they still lack the pizazz and atmosphere of forthcoming titles like EA's *Knockout Kings*.

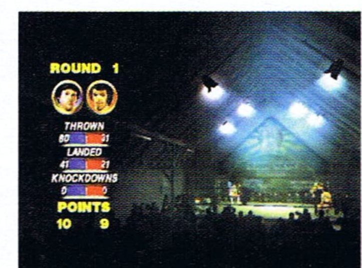
ROUND ONE

That's the slick front-end out of the way, but the last hurdle to delivering complete immersion in the Rocky experience is the boxing itself. While it's relatively successful for the most part, it's not perfect.

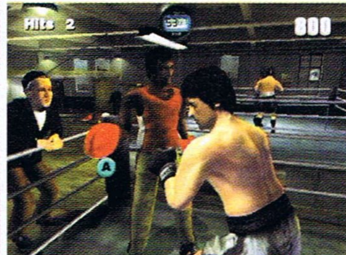
Despite feeling a little sluggish to begin with, the fighting system is actually quite versatile. Holding both triggers allows you to block and swiftly shuffle your feet. Holding the L-trigger allows you to duck and lean away from punches, while the R-trigger opens up the possibility of powerful uppercuts. The other buttons throw jabs and straight punches at your opponent's head

EYE OF THE TIGER

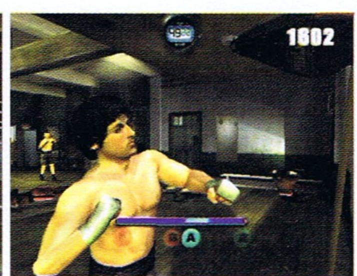
To keep yourself in contention, you'll need to train between bouts…



TIRING
After every bout you'll lose points through fatigue, but you can regain these by training.



STRENGTH
Or, Mickey Says. Just follow the on-screen prompts and react as quickly as possible.



SPEED
One of the toughest routines, you have to keep a steady rhythm up to score.



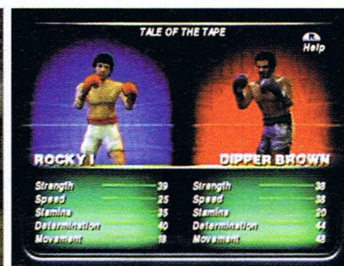
DETERMINATION
Sit-ups. When your assistant goes to chop your stomach, press X to tense up.



MOVEMENT
Smack dead animals in a freezer. You score if you're punching inside the green area.



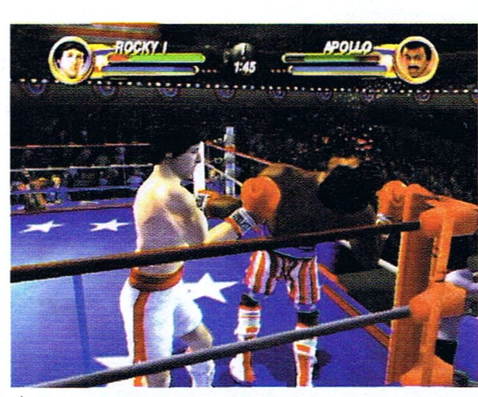
STAMINA
Tap A in time with the green light and enter button prompts to perform different tricks.



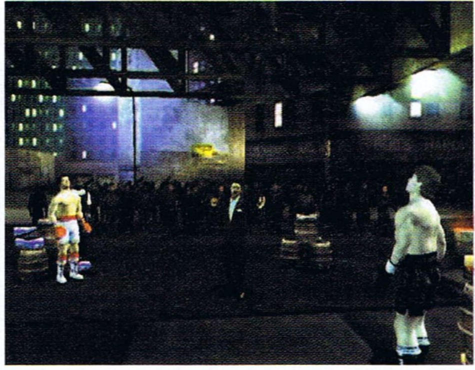
COMPARE
Once you're done, you can compare stats with the next opponent, and develop tactics.



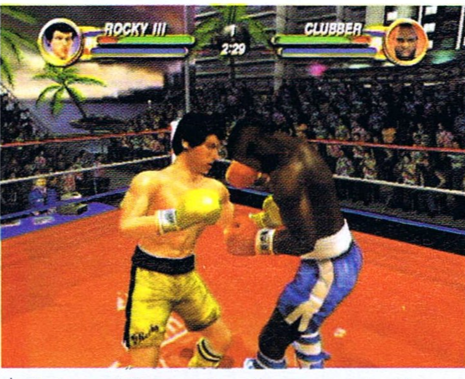
AUTOTRAIN
If you don't want to go through the routine you can select this – but you get fewer points.



▲ Get opponents into a corner for some serious damage.



▲ You even get to fight Tommy Gun outside Mick's gym.



▲ The boxers' likenesses have been captured well.

and body – naturally, by using these in conjunction with each other (and the analogue stick) you can perform combos or special hard-hitting blows. It all works well, and patience with the fighting system will reward you, especially when you begin to commit the more useful combos to memory.

"ROCKY ISN'T ANY OLD BUTTON-MASHER – TO SUCCEED YOU HAVE TO CONSIDER WHAT YOU'RE DOING"

Those expecting a fast-paced slug-fest should be wary, though. *Rocky* isn't the most accessible of fighters. But once you get your head around the whole ducking, diving, blocking, opening-spotting and countering aspect of the fighting style, it's actually very enjoyable. *Rocky* isn't any old button-mashing beat-'em-up – to succeed, you have to consider what you're doing. Wading in fists flying will not only knacker your player, but will open you up to a proper face-pasting. You have to bide your time, wait for openings, and evade an opponent's attacks before closing in.

OUT FOR THE COUNT

In single-player, you'll eventually figure out a far less stylish means of overcoming your rival, though. The easiest way to win is by cheesing your not-too-bright opponent with a set routine. This routine may not be the same for every fight, but eventually you'll find a cheap way out – as a result, matches can often degenerate into round after round of mind- and knuckle-numbing tedium. True, you can fight 'properly', but the temptation of guaranteed success when you want to unlock extras becomes far too alluring.

Still, against a cleverer human opponent, *Rocky* really comes into its own. The fact that your mates won't fall for cheap tactics means that the most genuinely skilled player will win through – which makes for some highly competitive and enjoyable gaming. It's this strong multiplayer aspect, along with the game's wealth of unlockable extras, that makes it well worth a look – even more so if you're a fan of the movies.

GERAINT EVANS



MENTAL MICKEY

Quite what's going on with cranky, wheezing trainer Mickey is anyone's guess. His whining ring-side advice is present and correct, but he sounds more like Freddy Kruger, and he prances around like some kind of elderly Keith Flint. But the best touch of all is that he's an unlockable character – giving you the chance to take the skinny gimmer into the ring. Priceless.



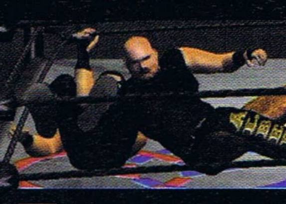
- True to the movies.
- Well animated and versatile boxers.
- Meaty bouts.



- Too easy to use cheap tactics.
- Fights can become repetitive and tedious.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Wrestlemania X8
THQ
NGC/72 70%
Poor grappling title, featuring oily muscle-men, grunting.



7 VISUALS
Well-animated boxers and a variety of detailed arenas.

8 SOUNDS
Great effects and samples, and those classic Rocky tunes.

7 MASTERY
Okay, but there's nothing particularly impressive here.

8 LIFESPAN
You'll be unlocking stuff for months. Multiplayer is also superb.

VERDICT

Won't be to everyone's tastes, but *Rocky* is one of the best fighters the Cube has to offer so far. A pleasant surprise.





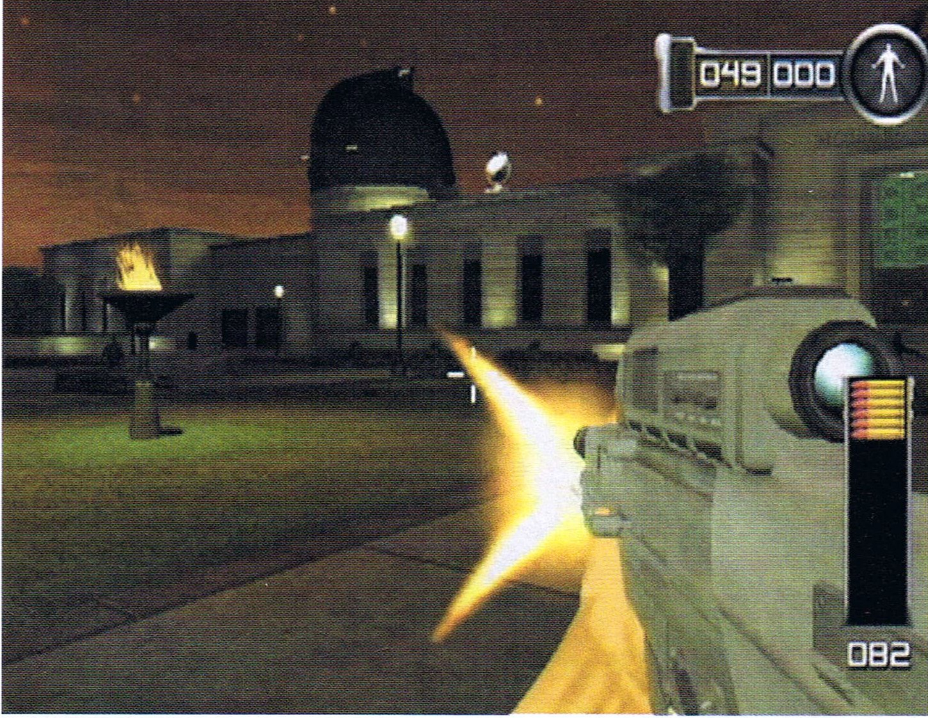
"Even the swearing helps add to the atmosphere"



Δ Find a disguise and you can infiltrate this pool hall.



Δ This Police HQ has been turned into a warzone.



Δ "Watch the mines John, watch the mines..." By the time you get to this stage, the difficulty is ramped up significantly, with rockets, helicopters, mines and terrorists doing their best to shorten your lifespan.



Δ By shooting these canisters, you can let off a jet of liquid nitrogen that'll freeze nearby enemies real nice.



Δ Oh the humiliation! Just what these actors' 'motivation' is, is anyone's guess – we'd go for 'looking like a pair of losers'.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	BITS STUDIOS
PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	6
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	YES

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Die Hard: Vendetta is out on the shelves on the 29th November. Get some in!

COST:
£40

DIE HARD VENDETTA

Billy Connelly lookalikes, swearing, excessive talk of 'donuts', and the kind of rudeness that'd make Conker blush. It's all in here...

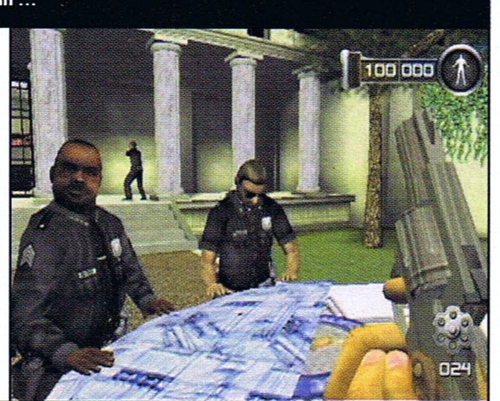
GET INTO THE GAME

Tool up and start shootin'...

ART LOVER, MCLANE

There is a training mission which precedes the first level, allowing you to get to grips with the basics of aiming and moving around – but you don't really have to go through it as the opening mission is simple enough and eases you into the action quite well.

You start the proceedings at an art gallery, where terrorists are holding a number of high-profile hostages – including your daughter. Have a chinwag with these rozzers to find out what you have to do, and then off you go.





Tugging on the coat-tails of last month's *Turok Evolution* and *Timesplitters 2* comes *Die Hard: Vendetta*. With no multiplayer, no real heritage to speak of and born off the back of a film licence Hollywood has left to stew for the last seven years, you'd be forgiven for passing *Vendetta* by. But titles like this have a tendency to pleasantly surprise – and *Die Hard* is a good example.

Taking on the role of the LAPD's John McClane (his likeness hasn't been approved, but it's a satisfactory Willis approximation) you find yourself outside a museum where terrorists have taken hostages at a high-profile event and, as dumb luck would have it, your daughter – freshly graduated from cop school – is on her first assignment. As ever, the incident sparks off a massive

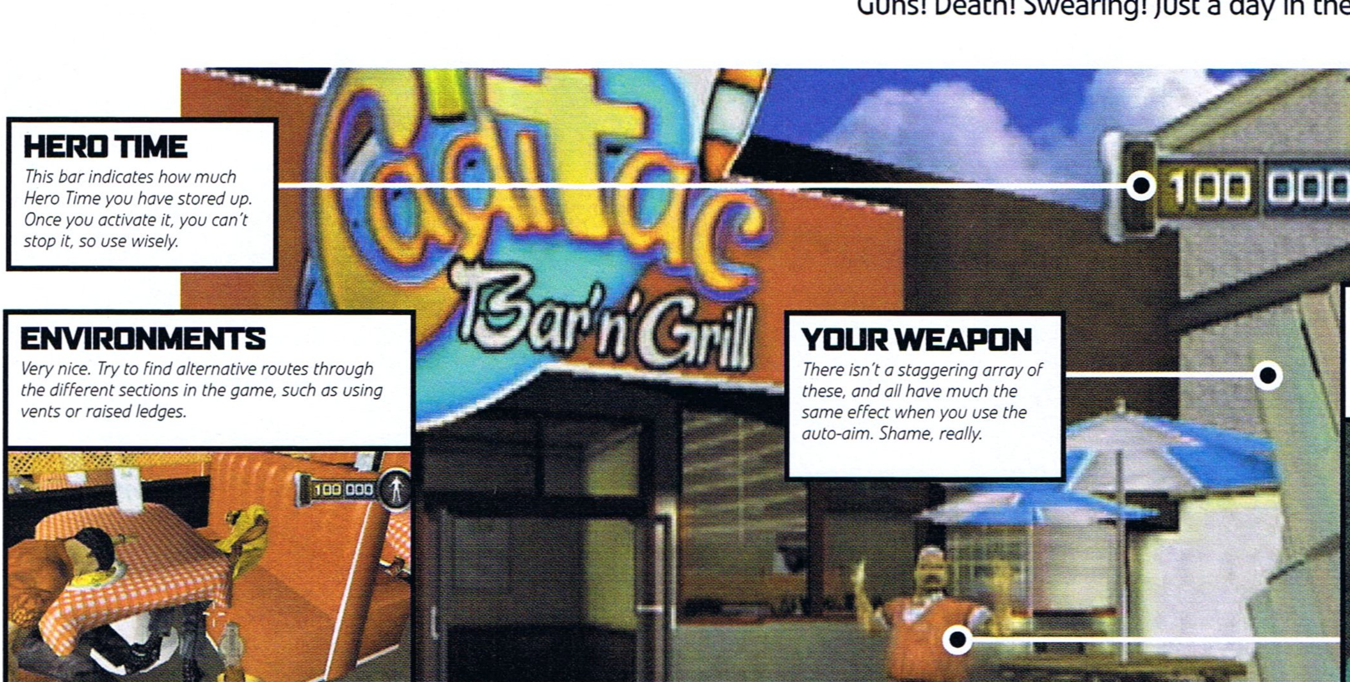


SLOW STRAFING

For some reason, Die Hard has trouble with strafing and moving forward at the same time, and circle-strafing proves to be very problematic. This restricted freedom, combined with McClane's sluggish movements, makes for a clunky-feeling game. A real shame.

DIE HARD: VENDETTA

Guns! Death! Swearing! Just a day in the life of Sergeant John McClane...



HERO TIME
This bar indicates how much Hero Time you have stored up. Once you activate it, you can't stop it, so use wisely.

ENVIRONMENTS
Very nice. Try to find alternative routes through the different sections in the game, such as using vents or raised ledges.

YOUR WEAPON
There isn't a staggering array of these, and all have much the same effect when you use the auto-aim. Shame, really.

FRIENDLIES
Make sure you talk to these guys as much as possible. More often than not they'll pass on valuable clues to help you get ahead.

STATUS
If your gun is out you'll walk fast. If you're holding it up or you've holstered it you'll walk silently. Also, people will behave differently when you talk to them, depending on what you're doing with your weapon.

NNNNGGGHH!
One example of Vendetta's annoying trial-and-error sections is in Nakatomi Plaza. A bomb is armed and you have to get out of the way in 15 seconds – which basically means getting blown apart again and again and again until you eventually get the scene right. Irritating.



investigation that takes you to countless locations around Los Angeles, as you uncover the true intentions of the terrorists and attempt to rescue your daughter. As hackneyed it can be at times (you must "hand over your badge and gun", bend the LAPD rules and go through the old this-time-it's-personal rigmarole), it turns out to be one of the game's underlying strengths.

"NOT SINCE GOLDENEYE OR ROGUE LEADER HAS A GAME SO CAPTURED THE ESSENCE OF ITS INSPIRATION"

MOVIE MAGIC

Not since *GoldenEye* or *Rogue Leader* has a game so perfectly captured the essence of the franchise it's trying to emulate. From start to finish, *Die Hard* does a remarkable job of making you feel as though you're taking part in Hollywood blockbuster. The pacing of the game has been clearly thought out. The way key moments in the plot steadily unfold is superb, giving plenty of justification for McClane's movements from location to location. Subtle hints and cross-references creep into each and every level to keep the gaming world both consistent and intriguing enough to compel you to push on further. Once you start to play, it's doubtful you'll ever *not* want to see the end.

The quality isn't limited to the scripting, either. From the rousing score (that changes depending on the mood) to the *mostly* excellent voice-over (give or take some cringe-worthy dialogue) it all helps to make this one of the most absorbing shooters you can buy. Even the swearing – which normally we wouldn't condone, of course – helps add to the atmosphere and gives the impression that you're really playing inside a *Die Hard* movie.



AUTO-CHUMP
The auto-jump feature was supposed to get rid of those Turok-style irritations. It works for the most part, but when you're trying to navigate thin gantries and you inexplicably throw yourself off the edge, it becomes very annoying. Even more so when you think you're going to jump and you merely fall to your doom.

IT'S A SET-UP

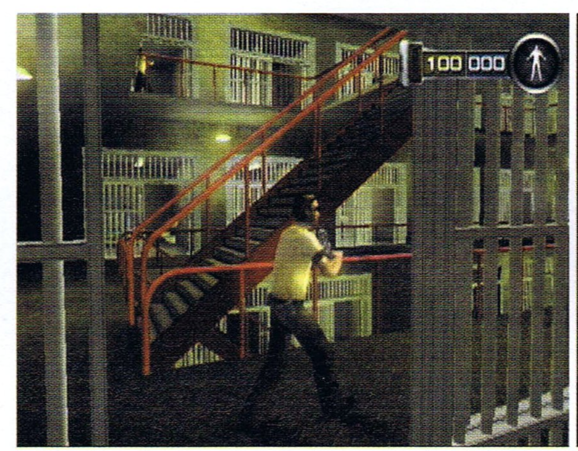
Unfortunately, the game's visuals aren't



"The level of needless frustration is phenomenally high"

YIPPIE-KAY-AY, MELON FARMER!

Despite its flaws, there are still loads of unique touches in the game. Here's a selection...



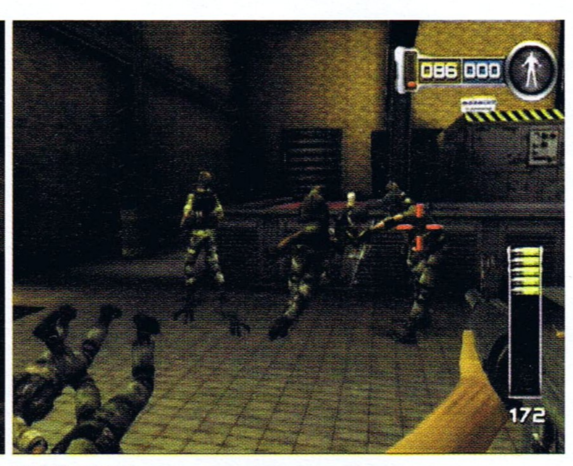
PUZZLES

Investigating your surroundings always yields a logical solution. In this case, you have to find a way out of prison without the guards spotting you. A highly satisfying aspect of the game.



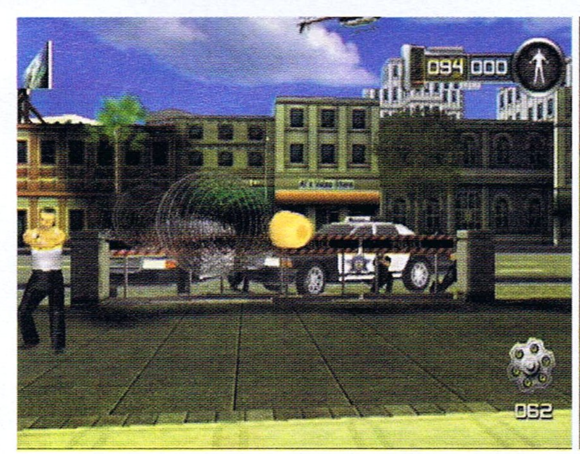
DROP YOUR WEAPONS

Put your gun away, hide in the shadows and listen. If you can find out who the leader of the soldiers is, you can sneak up behind them, grab their boss and force his goons to drop their weapons.



HERO TIME

Every time you rescue a hostage, you accrue Hero Time. Like Max Payne's Bullet Time feature, when you use it, everything in the game slows down – apart from you – making gunning down large groups easier.



CRITICAL BULLET

Clear out enemies in a certain area and you'll be see a slow-motion fly-by of the bullet hitting its target with a Matrix-style bullet trail. Can get annoying, but a nice enough touch all the same.



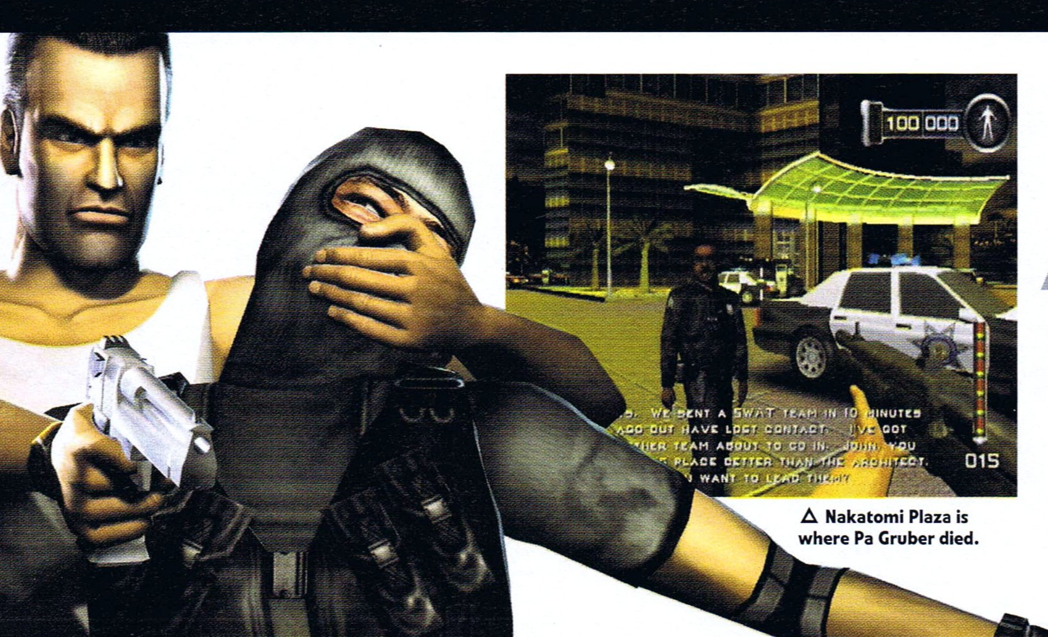
ALTERNATIVE TACTICS

Explore all the options in any given situation and chances are you'll find different ways of getting the job done. There's nothing better than finding a quieter, non-violent solution to a problem.



CHEESY ACTION

Staying true to the essence of the films, there's plenty of highly amusing cheesy dialogue, cut-scenes and cheeky nods to the movies – all of which perfectly capture the old Die Hard *flavour.*



△ **Nakatomi Plaza is where Pa Gruber died.**

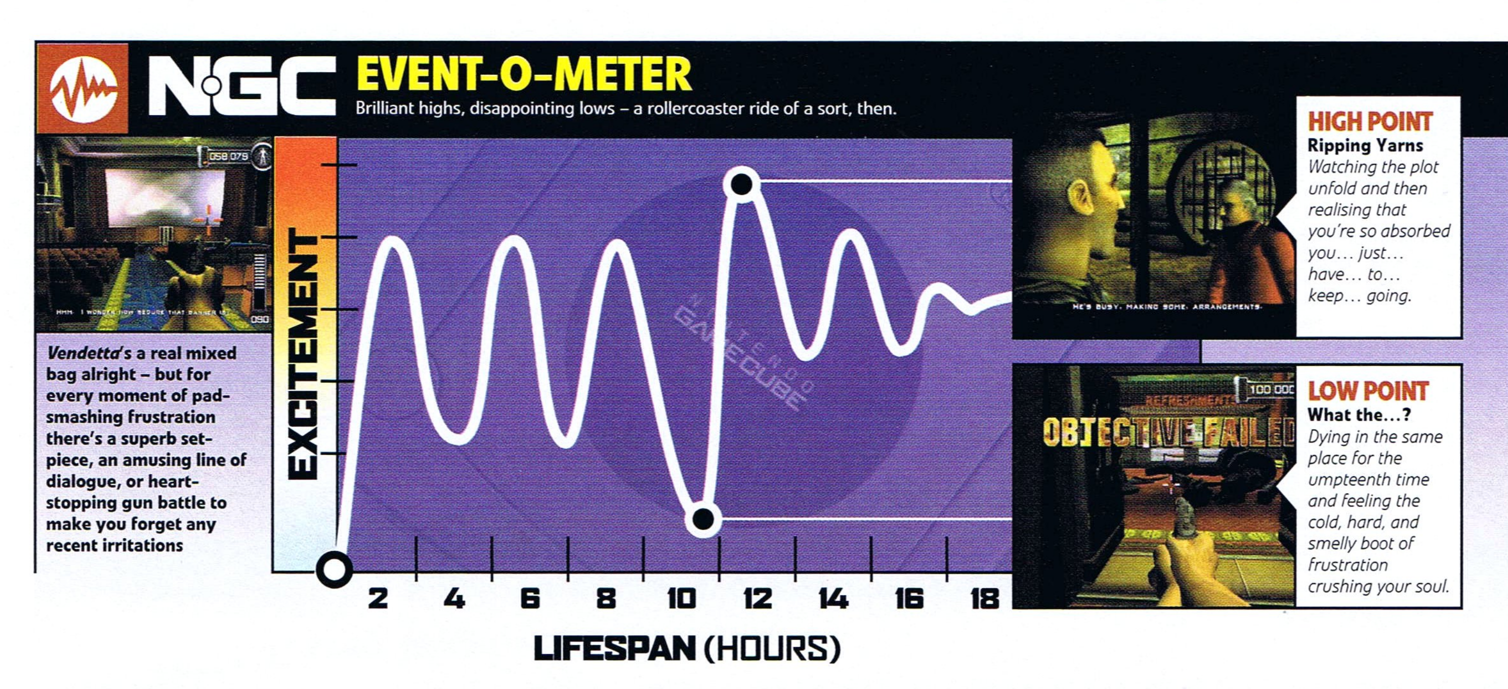
exactly the prettiest on the planet, with some bland and repetitive textures and worrying drops in frame-rate from time to time. Furthermore, the variation in the enemies you encounter and their intelligence isn't particularly impressive, but for *Die Hard* this isn't where you're enjoyment of the game stems from. Instead it's the game's structure, which breaks down to a series of wonderful set-pieces, events and situations – most of which can be approached from multiple angles. Whether you're sneaking around trying to ascertain who an enemy group's leader is, putting on a disguise to evade enemy gunfire, or simply storming in, all guns blazing, there's plenty of scope for achieving the same objective in a number of different ways.

> **"EVERYTHING ADDS TO THE OVERALL ATMOSPHERE, GIVING YOU THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU'RE REALLY PLAYING INSIDE A DIE HARD MOVIE"**

There's nothing particularly new about this of course – games such as *Deus Ex* (which *Die Hard* is slightly reminiscent of) are more free-form, but it's the sheer variety and frequency of the events and set-pieces

DID YOU KNOW? During the shooting of Die Hard, Bruce Willis and Demi Moore tied the knot in the Golden Nugget Hotel in Las Vegas. Little Richard oversaw the proceedings.

Guns! Death! Swearing! Just a day in the life of Sergeant John McClane…



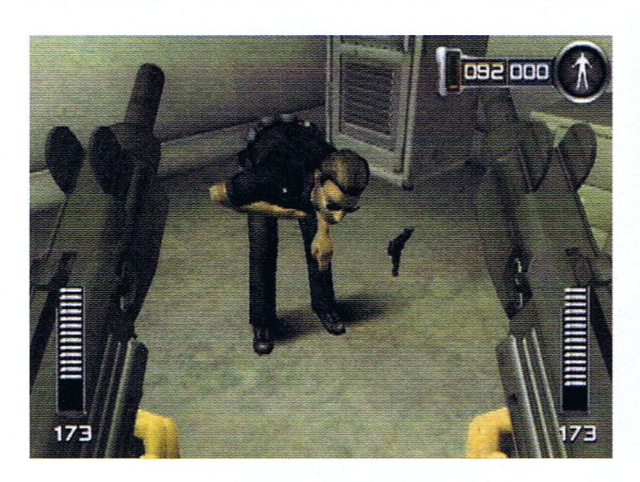
Vendetta's **a real mixed bag alright – but for every moment of pad-smashing frustration there's a superb set-piece, an amusing line of dialogue, or heart-stopping gun battle to make you forget any recent irritations**

HIGH POINT
Ripping Yarns
Watching the plot unfold and then realising that you're so absorbed you… just… have… to… keep… going.

LOW POINT
What the…?
Dying in the same place for the umpteenth time and feeling the cold, hard, and smelly boot of frustration crushing your soul.









△ **Another great moment, this. Take out the snipers to protect the SWAT team moving in below…**

themselves that's really refreshing. There are so many defining moments in here it's hard to single any out. While many aren't the most original, there are plenty that are genuinely imaginative, extremely well implemented – enough so that they don't feel contrived – and a real joy to experience. Bits have clearly put in a great deal of effort to offer something new, and it really shines through – which, unfortunately, makes exposing the game's many faults a painful thing to do.

FLY IN THE OINTMENT

You see, *Die Hard* suffers from a number of problems which seriously threaten the game's enjoyment and prevent it from becoming an essential purchase. First off, the controls don't feel very refined – at all. The sidestep is quite sluggish and when used in conjunction with the C-stick for circle strafing, makes for some cumbersome and imprecise movement. Furthermore, the mechanism for aiming is very twitchy. You can turn off features such as the auto-aim and automatic centering, but this does little to improve matters, which means you have to leave auto-aim on, ultimately dumbing down the whole experience.

But the real stinker is that the level of needless frustration is *phenomenally* high. At times *Vendetta* can be a crushing, soul-destroying experience, inducing extreme rage and making you cry in genuine frustration. You'll reach points in the game where you either die through no fault of your own, until you figure out *why* after your twentieth attempt. You'll work your way through a level only to be plunged to your doom due to the (normally well-implemented) auto-jump, or you're unable to cope with simple situations because of the controls' refusal to behave. Eventually, this can be overcome, but not because of any degree of skill. It all boils down to having an intimate knowledge of enemy placement and the surrounding scenery, earned not because the game is intuitive, but because you've died so many times you know the sections like the back of your hand. Such trial-and-error gameplay isn't our idea of fun.

At the end of the day, though, you should still give *Die Hard* a look – if only to get a taste of some of the fantastic moments it has to offer and to make sure that all the effort that's been put into it doesn't go to waste. It might be a rough diamond, but underneath that it's still a real gem.

GERAINT EVANS

MMM… SHINY!

While Die Hard's graphics aren't exactly eye-popping, there are some great effects in the game. Frosted glass, rippling and pouring water effects and, in particular, the way certain guns accurately reflect the environment and lighting around them. They're by no means important to the game, but they're lovely, and worth a mention all the same.



- Brilliant set-pieces.
- Fairly free-form.
- Imaginative and absorbing.



- Incredibly frustrating.
- Cumbersome and clunky controls.
- Ropey frame-rate.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Timesplitters 2
Eidos
NGC/73 92%
The best FPS on Gamecube, bar none. Get it in NOW.



7 VISUALS
Impressive environments, bland textures, smart FX and a poor frame-rate.

8 SOUNDS
Rousing music, rude speech and decent enough effects.

7 MASTERY
Jerky, but some imaginative and tightly focused level design.

7 LIFESPAN
No multiplayer, but some incentive to find new solutions.

VERDICT
A pleasant surprise. But the stand-out moments are marred by irritating flaws and often unbearable levels of frustration.





MAP
Even though the little cluster of islands isn't that enormous, it's still a good idea to keep one eye on the map.

MR HAPPY
See that big yellow doofus? That's you, that is. Not the most charismatic game hero ever created, but he has a certain guileless charm nonetheless.

TEMPLES
These are terribly important, signifying the villagers' undying love for your big yellow self. Don't forget to give them flowers, or they won't be able to finish building!

VILLAGERS
You can manipulate the camera to zoom in on the little fellas – they look rather crude, sadly.

DOSHIN THE GIANT

A happy yellow giant with a suspicious bellybutton gives flowers to villagers. Japanese? You guessed it.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	NINTENDO
PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	40
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Doshin the Giant is out in the shops. As in, out in the shops right now! This VERY MINUTE!



COST: £40

Weird. If these reviews were limited to a single word, that's certainly the one we'd choose. It's probably already on the tip of your tongue, in fact. After looking at the screenshots here you're probably feeling feeling a faint bemusement tinged with a sense of pleasant surprise, as when faced with something that just seems out of place – like a stripper in a church, or *Doshin the Giant* being given a PAL release. But which one would you rather play with?

KOOKY CUSTOMER

Doshin the Giant is so kooky-Japanese it almost hurts: the main dude himself, with his little tuft of hair and over-long arms, for a start. He appears out of the blue – literally, right out of the ocean like a jaundiced, philanthropic Godzilla – and wanders onto a tropical island one morning. With the power to tug trees right out of the ground and raise or lower the old terra firma at will, he (or rather, you) sets about helping the four native tribes build huts, followed by farms, villages, and so on. Sadly, for a god sim, your actions are pretty limited. The villagers express their desires in little speech bubbles, and these are limited to three or four common needs. Mostly, they want trees wrenching out of nearby ground (causing the area they were previously in to fade satisfyingly from a lush green to a scrubby brown) and stuck near them – they even point to where they want it. This is the limit of the resource management, sadly, although villagers can seemingly build their houses, munch on sawdust sandwiches, and clothe their children in fetching bark dungarees. Their other main bugbear is that

> **"DOSHIN APPEARS RIGHT OUT OF THE OCEAN, LIKE SOME JAUNDICED, PHILANTHROPIC GODZILLA"**

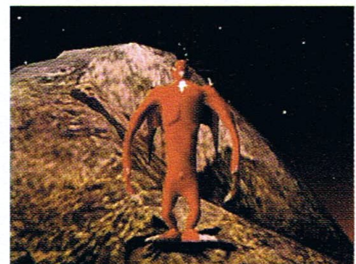


FLOWER POWER

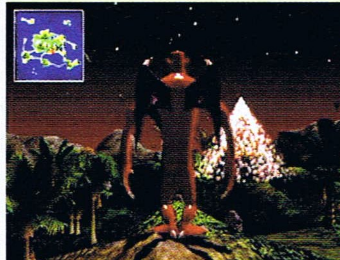
Each tribe is flourishing, and constructions glorifying your yellow self are underway. Then they all go a bit Crosby Stills and Nash, and demand flowers as the finishing touch to their shrines. But only one flower can exist at a time, and you have to create it by planting a load of trees together. Great.

HATE GIANT

Turn to the Dark Side? Never! Well, maybe. Oh, okay – go on then.



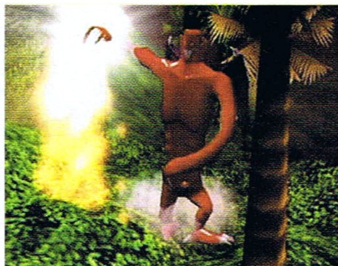
CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN
The Hate Giant is capable of moving quicker and jumping higher than his alter-ego. The seductive power of the dark side beckons…



BIGGER, BETTER, REDDER…
Basically, the Hate Giant can do pretty much everything that the Love Giant can do, and more besides. But you must resist! Or not.



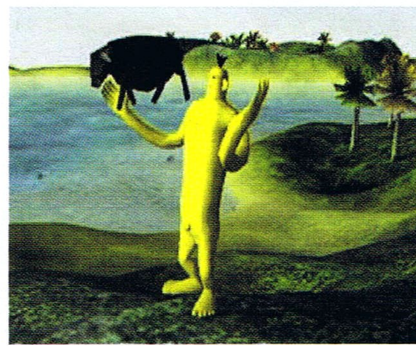
DEM BONES
Performing vile, evil deeds will bump up your evil-o-meter. When you squish enough folk, and get enough skulls, you grow in size.




DANCE, PUNY MORTALS!
While the Love Giant, Doshin, can only wander around looking gormless, Jashin here has all sorts of diabolical powers at his command.



△ **Hm… some over-size plants and a few huts, methinks. That'll keep those villagers happy.**



△ **Move, move, move any mountain…**



△ **Start off with one hut and before you know where you are… Being this big and clever, smugness is second nature.**

something often impedes the progress of one of their buildings – ironically, this is often the very tree you planted for them earlier. And they can only build on level ground, which is where the most impressive aspect of *Doshin the Giant* comes into play.

DANCE MOVES

Almost any area of land – mountains, the ocean floor, or wherever – can be raised or lowered by making Doshin do a funky dance thing (press the X and Y buttons). If you want to create a whole new little island, just wade out into the water and create one. You can sink it just as easily, or turn it into a mountain! Your changes are permanent, and while you may be hit with an initially giddy rush of power – "I can shape the very earth itself!" – you soon realise that, well, there isn't much point in doing so.

LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP

So instead you wander slowly from village to village, giving them trees as they need them, moving the trees when they get in the way, and making sure the ground is level so they can build lovely shrines and statues to you. When you do something they like, a little heart icon, or maybe lots of them, floats towards you – if you get enough, you grow in size and can perform more tasks. Do something they aren't so keen on (like squishing them), and they send out hateful skulls. Get enough of those, and your evil side – Jashin – grows (check out the 'Hate Giant' box above, for more on this). The wild cards come in the familiar form of natural and not-so-natural disasters, which can appear out of nowhere and erase all your hard work. Damnation! This is pretty much the only time that Jashin is of any use, apart from the satisfaction you gain from his orgiastic, counter-productive killing sprees. They take a few game-days (30 minutes each) to appear, and without them boredom would probably set in a lot earlier.

Keeping track of everyone and making sure their needs are fulfilled all keeps you pretty busy, but in a genre like this much better games have been and gone. *Doshin the Giant* is a rare chance to see a game that would otherwise be import only, but we could hardly recommend it as a must-buy.

TOM MAYO



CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Aside from the more obvious tree-planting, earth-moving malarkey, the path to victory lies with kidnapping. No, really – to encourage diversity, you need to take members of each tribe and put them together, to make sure you get all those crucial monuments made, in honour of your great self.



- Dynamic landscape is completely changeable.
- Control puny mortals.
- Interactive wildlife.



- It's no *Black & White.*
- Rubbish villager AI.
- You start each day at your original size. Boo!



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Pikmin
Nintendo
NGC/69 85%
Beautifully realised real-time strategy, Nintendo-style.



3 VISUALS
The real-time mountain creation is the only obvious highlight.

2 SOUNDS
Not much here, except some grating warbles from local wildlife.

5 MASTERY
Nice-looking, but a barest-of-bones take on the god game genre.

4 LIFESPAN
There's plenty to do, but there are more fulfilling ways to pass your time.

VERDICT
A quirky little oddity, originally a 64DD game, that feels incongruous on these shores. Fun for a while, but not an essential purchase.





"It feels like you're driving a tank through a swamp"



△ With an often poor frame-rates and heavy handling, *NFS* doesn't feel as slick as we'd have hoped. A real shame.

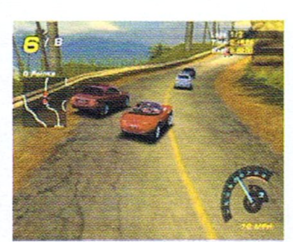


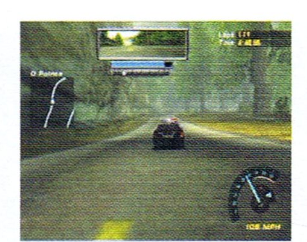
△ The selection of cars on offer is great, but the game's flaws never really makes any of them much fun to drive.



△ The other racers can be quite aggressive at times – making for some satisfying competition.







△ Many of the tracks are actually very impressive, with plenty of shortcuts to find and explore.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	EA
PUBLISHER	EA
PLAYERS	2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	5
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Need for Speed is out in the shops on the 25th October, if such a thing concerns you.



COST: £40

NEED FOR SPEED 2 HOT PURSUIT

If ever there was a worthy challenger to *Burnout* then this should be it… Erm, except it isn't.

EA's *Need for Speed* series has traditionally been very strong as far as delivering high-speed arcade-style driving experiences are concerned – and so we were hoping for great things from this latest Gamecube port. Unfortunately – and also surprisingly, considering the quality of the PS2 version – these expectations have not been met.

The premise itself is very good. Taking control of a good selection of real-world vehicles (Lamborghinis, BMWs, Lotuses and the like), you race around some stunning locations with the police hot on your heels. Attempting to get around the requisite number of laps, you have to contend with teams of police cars, helicopters, roadblocks and 'stinger' traps – all of which threaten to spin you out of control and knock you out of action. Surplus to this main mode is the Championship, which offers challenges and 'normal' racing sections, as well as the all important (two-player) split-screen option.

Now despite everything being present and correct – with some beautifully designed courses, complete with branching shortcuts through stunning scenery – we can't help but feel… well, a little gutted. After playing the PS2 version (which was a great, solid racer) this really pales in comparison. Firstly, the fancy camera effects that swept around your vehicle or – complete with fire trails – streaked up the track to give you a view of the road ahead have been inexplicably removed. It was hardly a gameplay enhancement, but it was a sweet addition all the same. Lastly, the visuals all seem far less vibrant that the PlayStation version. The frame-rate is, quite frankly, appalling, the colours seem a little washed out, and everything appears very sluggish. Due in part to the handling which feels as though each vehicle weighs a hundred tons – but mostly due to the fact that if the camera is behind your chosen vehicle, it feels less like driving a high-powered sports car on the road, and more like taking a tank through a swamp.

Quite what EA were thinking when a straight port would have been satisfactory, we don't know. But we don't like it. We don't like it *at all*. No we don't.

GERAINT EVANS



- Plenty of unlockable vehicles.
- Well-designed tracks.
- Lots of extra modes.



- Duff frame-rate.
- No camera effects.
- Doesn't live up to past Speed games.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Burnout
Acclaim
NGC/67 86%
Unzips its trousers and relieves itself all over NFS' windscreen.



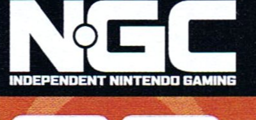
6 VISUALS
Looks okay, but runs like a lame dog. *Burnout* is far slicker.

7 SOUNDS
A case of love it or hate it for the tunes. The FX aren't bad, though.

4 MASTERY
Slow, even though there isn't much traffic to speak of.

7 LIFESPAN
There's plenty of game here if you're dedicated enough to play it.

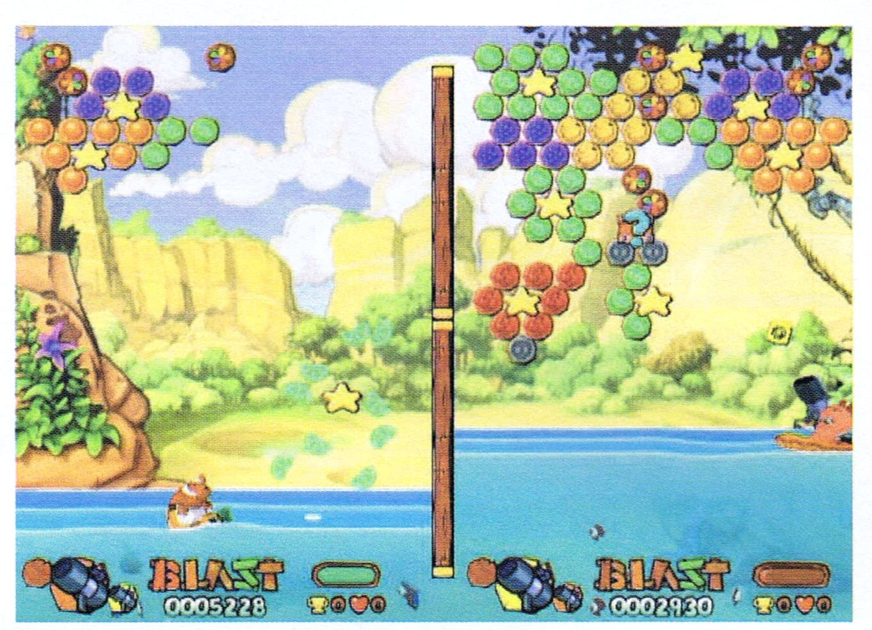
VERDICT
A shame. We enjoyed the PS2 version and this one pales in comparison – we suggest you get *Burnout* instead.






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"*Freekstyle* is tired, recycled, and a waste of time"



△ Worms. Worming their wormy way through a worm-ridden game of worms and puzzles. WORMS!





△ Look familiar? It ought to, really. Yipper.



△ That's the best sound effect ever made.

WORMS BLAST

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	TEAM 17
PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

Proof positive that it's possible to have a worm too far.



The original *Worms* was a a paragon of simple, elegant design and inspired lunacy. Originally appearing on the Amiga, this tale of annelids with shotguns and Uzis has long since gone through myriad permutations and updates, each one adding increasingly silly weapons (such as the Hail Mary hand grenade) which required less and less skill to use.

Worms Blast deviates completely from the original template. No longer does it feature teams of worms that go about slaughtering each other – for *Worms Blast* is a puzzle game. Sure, it's a puzzle game that sports invertebrates with guns – some things don't change – but rather than churn out yet another variation on a theme, developers Team 17 have changed tack entirely. In fact, *Worms Blast* resembles one puzzle game in particular – *Bust-A-Move*. Mostly, via a worm in a raft, you'll be shooting a bullet at a like-coloured cluster of balls, causing them to drop away. Naturally, there are many subtle tactics to be employed, as linked baubles of differing colours can be destroyed by careful thought, canny chaining of bullets, and so on. It's all very derivative, despite the fact that shooting at a given bubble-cluster is made all the more difficult by the sheer effort needed to paddle over to it. Tedious stuff.

Despite its familiarity, though, *Worms Blast* can be mildly diverting, but it's rarely more than that, even with the huge amount of puzzles and two-player shenanigans, and can be hugely frustrating.





△ There are impressive jumps, but that's it.



△ It's not sensible to ride bikes on a giant grid.

FREEKSTYLE

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	EA
PUBLISHER	EA
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM CARD PAGES	8
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

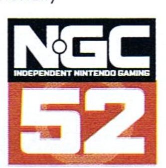
It's *SSX Tricky*... on bikes! (Dies.)



Never let it be said that EA don't know a good idea when they see one – the idea behind *SSX Tricky* was so good they used it again in *Freekstyle*. The two games are almost identical – apart, of course, from the substitution of bikes for snowboards – using a combo-based stunt system to increase speed and therefore provide much finger-fangling intensity as you progress.

Things are similar elsewhere – twisty-turny tracks, shortcuts galore, and an 'extreme' soundtrack. Of course, simply copying a good idea is no guarantee that lightning will strike twice – and so *Freekstyle* obeys the law of diminishing returns. It's fast and furious and very, very loud, but in this instance *SSX* has been photocopied, diluted, cloned and run to ruin. Partly this is the fault of shoddy control – you don't feel at any time that you're actually riding a bike, as they skate over the surface of the tracks and could be refrigerators, such is the gap between vehicle and behaviour – it's like *Excitebike 64* never happened. But *Freekstyle* also suffers because *SSX* simply does everything so much better. Why have fish fingers when you can have smoked salmon?

Don't be fooled by the apparent novelty on offer here – if you own *SSX Tricky* you have no reason to bother with this. Its sense of speed and altitude might be occasionally breathtaking, but the rest of *Freekstyle* is tired, recycled and a total waste of time.

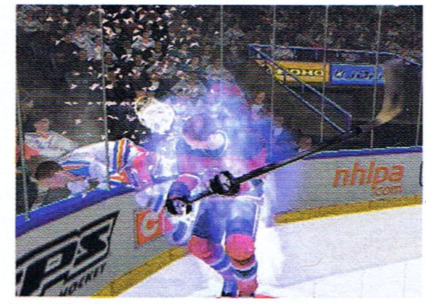


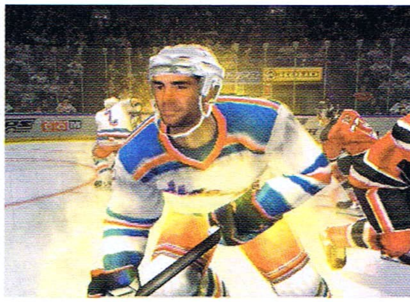


△ Vroom! Don't be fooled by the passable good looks, for *Freekstlye* is a reheated plate of old tripe.



△ Beautiful men and their beautiful sticks. Mm.


△ *NHL Hitz* is crazy, man. CRAZY. Y'hear?


△ Giant fiery gloves of doom and several pucks.


△ Transformers – robots in disguise. Or hockey.

NHL HITZ 20-03

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	BLACK BOX
PUBLISHER	MIDWAY
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM CARD PAGES	8
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

Quite literally, a flaming good game of hockey.

Over-the-top versions of otherwise ordinary sports games have been Midway's main stock in trade of late, and this, a *FIFA*-style annual update, is fairly successful in meshing an effective recreation of ice hockey and cartoon violence (although, of course, ice hockey has never really needed much help in the cartoon violence stakes).

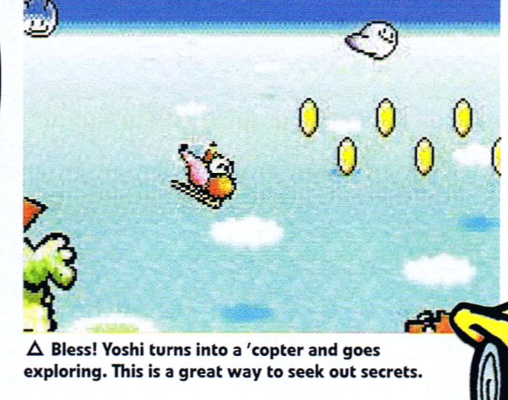
However, unlike *FIFA*, *NHL Hitz 20-03* has actually managed to improve itself over last year's model, and developers Black Box should be applauded for their efforts. The main change concerns the 'Fire' novelty – fill up a bar and you can ignite a player, who then becomes an unstoppable puck machine. Now you've got two bars – one for a single player, one for the whole team, so there's a little strategy involved. And despite the emphasis in shallow-but-fun arcade gameplay, the game encourages you to get involved for the long haul with the franchise mode, as stats can be gradually tweaked and increased. There's also loads of minigames and a pleasing Hockey School training mode. Minor improvements, but they're improvements nonetheless. *Hitz* is still shallow and silly, but it's fast, brutal fun.





NGC GAME BOY ADVANCE REVIEWS THIS MONTH





△ Bless! Yoshi turns into a 'copter and goes exploring. This is a great way to seek out secrets.



△ Use the R shoulder button to target and launch eggs at unwelcome enemies. Or lick up the smaller ones.



△ The levels are just *beautiful* – truly, Nintendo have produced one of the finest-looking games on the GBA.



△ The Yoshster does his best escape trick. Unfortunately, there's... no... escape... Great level, this.

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 3 YOSHI'S ISLAND

The best GBA game yet. Simple as that, really.

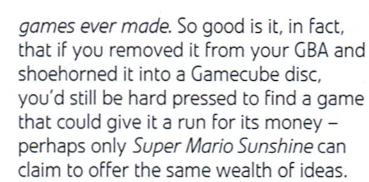
INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30



You only have to spend a couple of minutes playing *Yoshi's Island* to realise that this is not only one of Nintendo's most brilliant titles, but quite possibly one of the *best games ever made*. So good is it, in fact, that if you removed it from your GBA and shoehorned it into a Gamecube disc, you'd still be hard pressed to find a game that could give it a run for its money – perhaps only *Super Mario Sunshine* can claim to offer the same wealth of ideas.

"NOT JUST ONE OF NINTENDO'S BEST TITLES BUT POSSIBLY ONE OF THE BEST GAMES EVER MADE"



If you never caught this on the SNES, you simply have no excuse now: guiding Yoshi and his passenger – a tears-prone Baby Mario – through the game's six worlds (sub-divided into eight parts, including two boss levels) is stupendous. Each level is different to the last, leading to constant, joyful surprises. Secret bits litter the levels – some are merely hidden inside those famous green pipes, but most require a good deal more work. Find one and you're rewarded even further – levels sprawl, down and up as well as left and right, and just as you think you've got it nailed, worked it out, it piles another surprise on you, like Yoshi dumping Mazza and morphing into a helicopter, in order to go off and explore the level and seek out its dangers. The ideas seem simple, true, but the way in which they're implemented and, in particular, the triumph that is the sublime level design, lifts *Yoshi's Island* way, *way* above most of its half-arsed competitors.

This has stacks of replay value, with whole new areas opening up weeks and months after you bought the game – but, to be honest, even if it didn't, this would still be exceptional.



DID YOU KNOW? Yoshi isn't the only, er, person that can lay claim to owning an island. Stunningly rich businessman Richard Branson bought Necker Island in the Caribbean ten years ago and now allows common plebs to take holidays there – albeit for about a grand a day.


Sure, it looks okay, and the sound is really good – *but you only have to use two buttons* throughout.

INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

STAR WARS EPISODE II THE NEW DROID ARMY

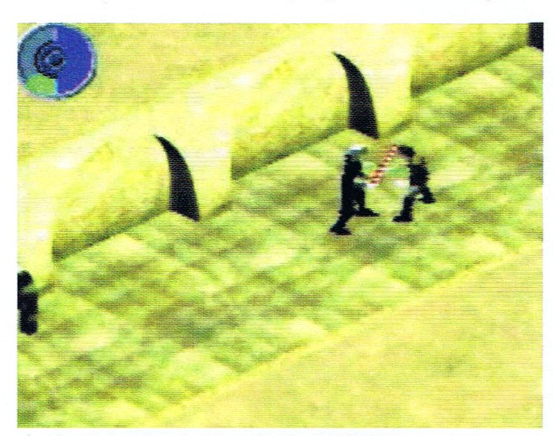
Anyone fancy some really basic blasting action? (Silence.)

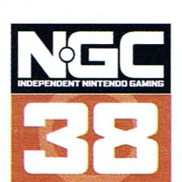

Based on an advanced version of the *Scooby Doo* engine – *brilliant!* – this standard, and thoroughly unexciting, Star Wars shoot-'em-up proves beyond all reasonable doubt that film licences – but for very, *very* few exceptions – are total rubbish.

Viewed from an isometric perspective, the objective is simple: guide Anakin through the game's various levels, pressing Up/Left or Up/Right on the D-pad and occasionally tapping A to dispatch endless, cretinous members of the droid army (as well as a few special guest stars, such as jawas and sand people). That's it. Play is interrupted by a few conversations where you have to stare into the eyes of The World's Worst Actor and whoever he comes into contact with, but it's not long before you get back to the staggeringly tedious action.

Hey, but you soon discover that if you press R, a small circle will surround our frowning hero and send enemies flying back – that's your Jedi powers, that is. Yawn.

On the upside, *The New Droid Army*'s sound is, largely, superb – whack some good headphones on and you'll note even the smallest sound effect is spot-on. But, at the end of the day, it's only sound. Best avoid this.


It's a lightsaber duel! Just like in the films! Er, anyone?

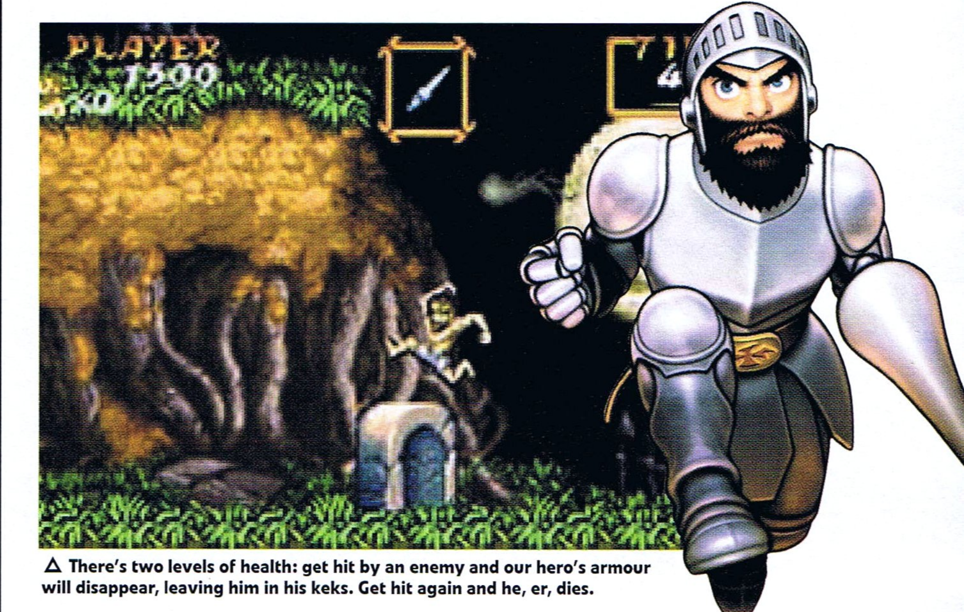




These ghosts are flippin' annoying, swooping down to wipe out your energy. Tsk.



There are stacks of enemies – this horrible bird gives you a real run for your dough.



There's two levels of health: get hit by an enemy and our hero's armour will disappear, leaving him in his keks. Get hit again and he, er, dies.

INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	CAPCOM
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

SUPER GHOULS AND GHOSTS

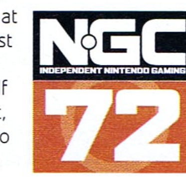
SNES classic gets GBA update – and it's still *really bloody hard.*

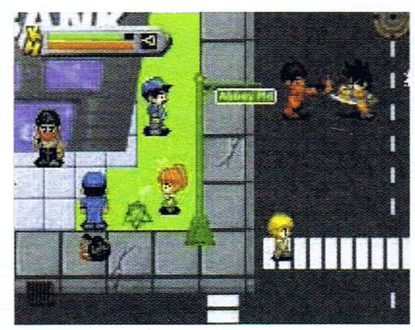

Not that we're against a bit of a challenge but *Super Ghouls and Ghosts* has got to be the hardest game we've ever played. *Ever.* As the clock passes a minute, you'll be crushing the A-button with your thumb as – for the fiftieth time – you plummet to an avoidable but all-too-predictable death.

> **"WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET – A GAME THAT CACKS ALL OVER YOU"**

To be honest, it feels wrong to criticise a game for being too hard but *Super Ghouls and Ghosts* is absolutely rock, the sort of game that allows you *absolutely no margin of error* at *any time*. Eventually, despite your best intentions to see it through, you become a bit narked off with it. Which is a shame, because technically this is superb – delicious visuals, fantastic music, all crackling along at a rate of knots – and manages to perfectly recapture the magic of the SNES original.

But this is the flipside of *Yoshi's Island*: Nintendo's platformer is, on the surface, fairly simple, but beneath beats the heart of a complex and extravagantly rewarding game. Outwardly, this seems to offer more – dig deep, though, and you'll find what you see is pretty much what you get – a game that outwits you by cacking all over you at the merest hint of a mistake. If you get it, prepare to be angry.





△ Crash! It's RPG action all the way as you wander around this fantasy land. And the M25.



△ Bang! Jabber with passers-by in order to establish what in the hell is going on.



△ Dollop! Send fireballs in your enemy's general direction and watch them shoot past.



△ Tragic, utterly tedious stuff as the *Dragonball Z* licence gets flushed down the bog.

DRAGONBALL Z THE LEGACY OF GOKU

A bit of fighting. But mostly just wandering around. Yawn.

INFO BURST

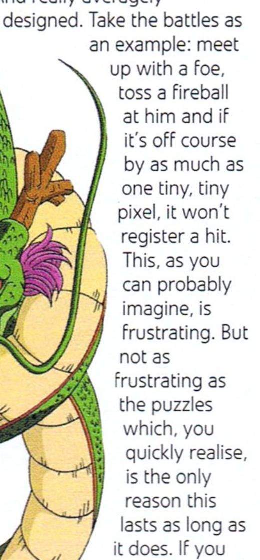
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	INFOGRAMES
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

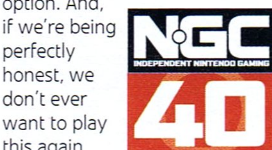


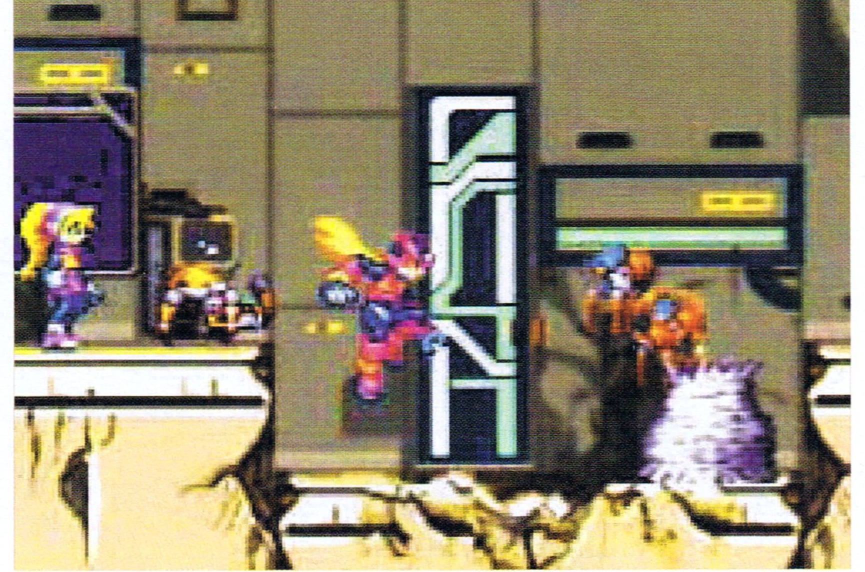
For a game based on such an action-packed series, developers Webfoot deserve a special kind of congratulations for draining every last drop of excitement out of *Legacy of Goku*. Because, make no mistake, this is *really* dull.

And really averagely designed. Take the battles as an example: meet up with a foe, toss a fireball at him and if it's off course by as much as one tiny, tiny pixel, it won't register a hit. This, as you can probably imagine, is frustrating. But not as frustrating as the puzzles which, you quickly realise, is the only reason this lasts as long as it does. If you didn't have to seek out and pick up object one and then take it back to place one, then seek out and pick up object two and take it back to place two (you can see the pattern, we'll bet) – you wouldn't have a game. It would be over in about three hours. Instead, proceedings are squeezed out like Geary's Irish pants to the point where the battles – the reason for buying any *Dragonball Z* game, surely? – are nudged out in favour of tedious exploration of every last inch of scenery. And it doesn't end there – sometimes the developers don't give you enough of an idea what your objective is, meaning you're left with a simple choice: (a) scour every pixel of the game in a futile attempt to secure the object you're after, or (b) put the GBA down and switch it off.

If we're being perfectly honest, we opted for the second option. And, if we're being perfectly honest, we don't ever want to play this again.



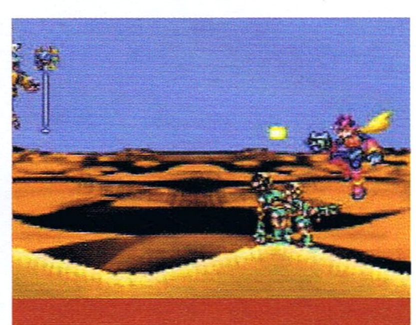




△ Lead your enemies a merry dance thanks to the inclusion of the new *Pokémon*-like Cyber Elves.



△ Like most of the games in the series, this is pretty taxing stuff – prepared to get angry.



△ The locations throw up a few surprises, like this sandy planet. Note the Egyptian-style foes.

MEGA MAN ZERO

Mega Man in new gameplay idea shocker! Well, *one* new gameplay idea, to be honest.

INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	CAPCOM
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30



It looks better, sounds better and plays pretty much the same. That's how you'd sum up *Mega Man*'s first GBA outing. If you're looking for a life-changing platform adventure, cast your eyes backwards to *Yoshi's Island*. If you're looking for a *Mega Man* game that offers a bit more than its identical predecessors, then this might just be your 'thang'.

The most obvious change is the inclusion of Cyber Elves. As you might recall, previous *Mega Man* games had our hero absorbing the powers of enemies in order to beef himself up. Not any more. With *Pokémon* still hanging heavy in the air, Cyber Elves are small collectables that pop up after enemies die, aiding you in battle by bestowing you with various powers. It's a neat enough idea, and changes the approach you take with bosses and big enemies to start with – but it seems to fade away a little as you progress through the game, largely due to the fact that a lot of the Cyber Elves seem to offer the same sort of 'skill'. The play areas and structure of the game don't help, of course – this is, effectively, every other *Mega Man* game ever, breeding an air of unexciting familiarity (as well as frustration: the leaps of faith are still making lives living hells). But it is, at least, a start.




△ The old pig-cops inhabit the most unlikely of places – they even crop up on space stations.


△ You'll recognise the weapons from the previous *Duke* games – as well as this enemy.

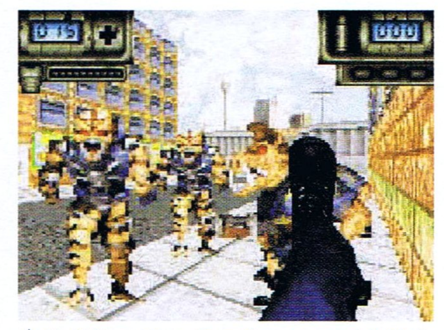

△ There's the option to turn of the crosshair if you fancy making your task that much harder.


△ There's nothing like blowing enemies into small chunks – just look at those poor saps on the right.

△ Have it! Right in the head. There's plenty of claret spilling in *Duke* – just the way we like it.



△ The plot – if you can even call it that – is related via text. But there is plenty of speech too.


△ Multiplayer! Up to four of you can grab hold of the game's best weapons and (yak) duke it out.

INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	TAKE 2
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	YES
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

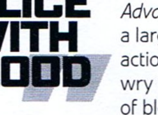
DUKE NUKEM ADVANCE

Carve up pigs, blow aliens out of windows and take on your friends in a four-way face-off. It's time to Dook.

Utterly puerile, staggeringly violent, and well short of qualifying for an equal opportunities award, *Duke Nukem Advance* is a riot of a GBA shooter, proving once and for all that Nintendo's genius little piece of handheld kit can turn its hand to pretty much anything it fancies.

Controls-wise, things don't get much more simple: move with the D-pad, strafe with the shoulders, jump with B and – most importantly of all – blast with A. Like other GBA shooters, this suffers from not being able to look up and down, leading to awkward – and frustrating – moments where enemies are out of range, either at the top or bottom of your screen. But you learn to live with it, principally because the game is largely generous on the health front, not stealing too much from you, even if you're struggling with the fact that you can only swing left or right.

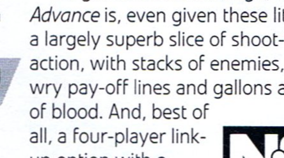
"DUKE NUKEM IS A SUPERB SLICE OF SHOOT-'EM-UP ACTION WITH BIG GUNS AND REAMS OF BLOOD"



Where the game really becomes a bit of an endurance is in its pacing. It moves fast, it chucks enemies around, but it doesn't vary things a lot until much later on. Stick at it and the game rewards you with bigger, more interesting environments, and enemies that don't just run towards you and then kindly collapse into a pile of entrails. But you really *do* have to stick at it. Classic 2D pig-sprites bring back the memories, but they make for pretty undemanding fodder. Especially as you work your way through the game's ten weapons – a couple of which, you'll be pleased to hear, are favourites carried over from the old PC *Nukems*.

It's got to be said, though, that *Nukem Advance* is, even given these little niggles, a largely superb slice of shoot-'em-up action, with stacks of enemies, big guns, wry pay-off lines and gallons and gallons of blood. And, best of all, a four-player link-up option with a simply brilliant multiplayer game.

Ballistic: Ecks vs Sever is better – but this isn't far behind.



NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING 85

DID YOU KNOW? If Duke really did nukem – Duke, in this instance, being the USA and 'em, in this instance, being every other nation on Earth – the temperature at ground zero (the point of impact) would be 500 million degrees celsius. Toasty.

"It's basically about trading, chatting, and collecting furniture"



MAN ABOUT TOWN

As the only human in a town filled with animals, it's entirely down to you to help the locals get on with their lives. Even something as simple as taking borrowed items from one neighbour to another won't happen without you.

CLOCK WATCHING

The town changes appearance during the day, and at night most people are in bed. So if you're at work or school during the day, you'll miss out on a lot of stuff. The solution is to shift the Gamecube's clock back a few hours.

SAY WHAT?

Everybody has something to say to you – often a lot more than you want to hear. And some of the comments they come out with are just plain weird, sometimes with a sinister edge. Maybe we're just reading too much into it…

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	NINTENDO
PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	58
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Out now in the States, but not so much as a sniff of a release date over here.

COST:
$50 (£35)

ANIMAL CROSSING

All aboard! For a Nintendo journey you're not going to forget in a hurry…

ANIMAL CROSSING

Have you got what it takes to be… er, a good neighbour?

△ Groan. Some animal humour is a little more sophisticated than this, you'll be pleased to know.



△ I'm not having that in my house!



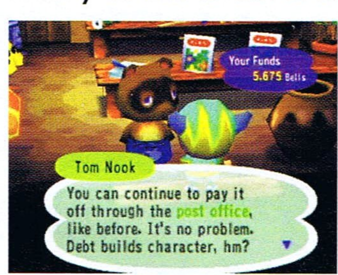
△ Bigger house equals more room for stuff.



△ Nook's Cranny… Tom Nook the raccoon… Japanese for raccoon is tanuki. A brilliant translation job!

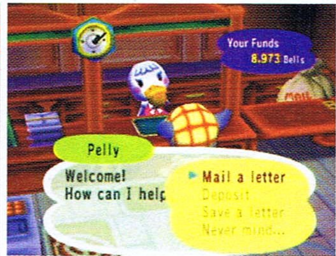
BEAST BUDDIES

Every town is different, and you'll soon make some good friends…



TOM NOOK

More than just the local shopkeeper, Tom Nook effectively runs the town. He has fingers in many pies, from money lending to stock market dealing. We suspect the mayor is merely a political puppet controlled by Nook.



PELLY

She controls the post office that's at the heart of the town, and collects money for Tom Nook. All new residents must pay their dues to Pelly and Nook before being allowed to become full citizens. She also deals in eCards.



ROSIE

An unpredictable sort of cat who may be one of the easiest residents to completely win over. Her neighbour, a chipmunk called Pecan, could be the fly in the ointment, as the pair can argue all day, leaving Rosie very irritable.



STELLA

Possibly the stupidest animal, although recent arrival Nosegay, an art-collecting anteater, runs her pretty close. Stella can often be found wandering, lost and confused, in the woods near her home. She's also quite ugly.



WART JR

Despite his psychopathic tendencies, Wart can be a likeable sort of chap. His grumbling, grouchiness and hints at a past history of violence may be a bit worrying for some, but he does have a soft spot for fluffy, hideous Stella.

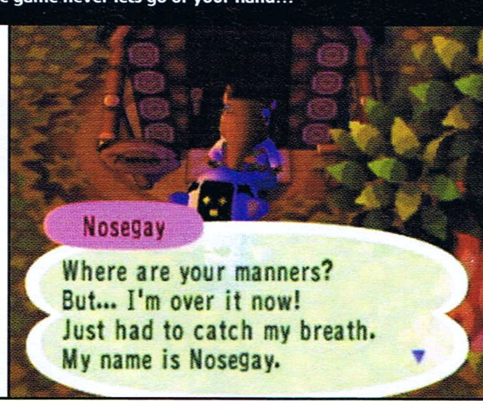


GET INTO THE GAME

It couldn't be easier. The game never lets go of your hand…

LET'S GO!

Start a new game, and be sure to give yourself and your town names you're not likely to be ashamed of in the future, as there's no way to change them once you've saved for the first time. Early things to do include introducing yourself to all of the locals, writing your first notice for the board, and doing a bit of landscaping work on Tom Nook's garden. Also, don't forget to check your mail – if you're using the memory card that came with the game, you'll get two free NES games.





You know how you wait ages for a Nintendo game, enduring delay after delay, finish it in a couple of weekends, then sit around for six months or so waiting for the next one?

Well, *Animal Crossing* is the complete opposite. It was hardly the most anticipated title ever, being treated with take-it-or-leave-it indifference by an audience that didn't really know what to make of the impenetrable Japanese N64 and Gamecube versions. But treat yourself to a copy on US import and you might still be playing it by the time *Zelda* comes out – that's *Zelda VR* on the Nintendo Holosphere, mind.

Animal Crossing really is something else. It's basically all about trading, chatting, and collecting furniture – which, we have to admit, sounds like a recipe for the dullest game of all time. However, the beauty of it is that it's effectively an online game that isn't actually online, and offers the best of both worlds – the long-distance communication of an internet game coupled with the face-to-face ▶

"THE BEAUTY OF ANIMAL CROSSING IS THAT IT'S EFFECTIVELY AN ONLINE GAME THAT ISN'T ONLINE"

"There's some very clever (and darkly amusing) script-writing"



STRANGE CUSTOMS

See our nifty skull-and-crossbones T-shirt and bandana here? We designed it using a GBA, although the main game has the same simple drawing tools built in, too. Then we took it to the Able Sisters' shop down by the beach, and they stuck it on display in their gallery of textiles. And after making friends with Rosie here, it came as a pleasant surprise to see her sporting the same design on her umbrella a few days later. Thank goodness she didn't choose one of our other designs though, as they might have raised a few eyebrows around the village – not to mention got her arrested. Be careful what you draw…

TRAVELLING FRIGHT

All you need is one friend with an Animal Crossing game…

TOOT TOOT!

When you've really started to make a name for yourself in your own neighbourhood, why not go and visit a friend in another town? Paul has just started playing, and he's beginning a new life in Surfton, which is miles away from where he grew up. He must be lonely, so let's pay him a visit. With Paul's memory card in slot B, it's all aboard the Surfton express!



AN EVENTFUL JOURNEY

No sooner had I settled down to enjoy the journey, than a faceless freak called Blanca sat opposite. Apparently her face "came off in the wash" and she very much wanted us to draw her a new one. A strange request, but I couldn't turn down a damsel in distress, and created this vision of loveliness. Wonder if I'll see her again…

UNWELCOME VISITOR

Paul's town is really nice! A totally different layout, with different residents, and peach trees instead of pears. It's beautiful! Consumed by jealousy, I set to work chopping down every tree I could find. After a while my axe broke in half, so I had to pop back home to buy a new one from Tom Nook. Then I returned for more deforestation.







REAPING THE REWARDS

With a pocketful of peaches and quite a decent sum of money plundered from treasure spots dotted around the landscape, I made my escape. The peaches will grow into lovely peach trees, and I'll be damned if I let Paul loose on my memory card to get his revenge. Anyway, I left a note saying Dan did the dirty deeds with the axe.

contact – sort of – of a multiplayer console game.

In *Animal Crossing* you're a young boy or girl leaving home to start a new life in a peaceful village. Being an outsider, you'll have to work hard to make new friends and become an accepted part of the village lifestyle. That means doing errands for people who need help, and showing up for all the big festivals and special events.

The aim, if there really is one, could be to design yourself the best possible house. You often get given furniture as a reward for doing a good job, some of which you'll want to keep and other pieces you'll just sell in the local shop. But in all honesty, the whole point of it is simply to enjoy being a part of the community.

As such, you can customise the tiniest details. You can chop down trees, plant flowers, and generally landscape the area as you see fit – and the nicer it looks, the more folks will want to move there as the game progresses and the village becomes a town. You can design simple patterns or logos on a Game Boy Advance, and upload them into the town's haberdashery shop. If the locals like them, you'll often spot them sporting your designs on their T-shirts and umbrellas. People that really like you will ask you to teach them a special word to say after every sentence – coupled with the custom artwork, it offers some intriguing possibilities for mischief.

As if all that wasn't enough to make your copy of *Animal Crossing* look totally different from your friend's, the landscape is randomly generated when you start the game, and you're given five or six neighbours from a long list of potential residents. It may just be an illusion created by some very clever (and darkly amusing) script-writing, but the locals actually seem to form relationships with one another. We found it believable anyway, which is saying something when every resident has an animal's head and a voice that sounds like Stephen Hawking running low on batteries.

MUSIC MAESTRO

Got a music system but no tunes to play on it? You need to listen to Totakeke, the musical hound who hangs out by the train station from 8pm on Saturday nights. He'll sing you one of his own interesting compositions, and will then give you an 'air check' for free – it's the musical note thing you need to put in your stereo at home. None of this old-fashioned CD business.

> **"YOU CAN CUSTOMISE THE TINIEST DETAILS, WHICH OFFER INTRIGUING POSSIBILITIES FOR MISCHIEF…"**

THE NEIGHBOURLY THING

It can be a lonely place on your own. Everyone seems to want something from you, whether it's money or just trivial favours. Surely humans should stick together in a cruel, animal world?

THE WARMEST OF WELCOMES



DEAR MUM, I hope you are well, and are not feeling too guilty about having sent your only child to live in a faraway town, without a place to stay or even a change of clothes.

IT'S OK, because I met a nice goblin who promised to find me something when we arrived. His friend Tom Nook met me at the station, and said he could give me a house!

I THINK I picked the nicest one. It doesn't have a bed or any furniture, but there's a tape player. With no music. Tom says I work for him now, and he's keeping all my wages.

LUCKILY I'm quite resourceful as well as being a bit workshy. I won't have to pay him if he just disappears, will I? So the first thing I did was post an advert to hire a hitman.

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER



DEAR MUM, Nobody ever seems to walk past the noticeboard, so I had to venture out into the forest. I met a psychotic talking toad, and I'm going to find out if he likes guns.

IN THE MEANTIME I'll just bide my time and work for that capitalist slave-driver Tom. He'll get his in the end. At least I've got a couple of old videogames to while away the evenings.

I CAN ALSO visit a little tropical haven I like to call Death Island. I hoisted my flag there to claim it. The lone resident is an imbecile who staggers around in a daze. I'll have fun here.

AND THE guy who runs the boat service is off his head too. He sang me a song about how he kidnapped some girl, took her out to sea, and made her drink salt water until she was sick.

I'LL BE THERE FOR YOU



DEAR MUM, When I woke up this morning I found I had a new neighbour. His name is Dan, and he says he got here just in time for happy hour. He drew a pint of Guinness on his door.

DAN'S HOUSE is a total pigsty, with fleas and cockroaches crawling everywhere. I lent him my NES but I don't think I want it back after it's been in a place like that. I'd rather burn it.

BUT THE WORST thing of all is the next time I went back to my holiday retreat, I found Dan's special Oirish flag flying over Death Island. I tell you, my blood almost boiled.

SO I WENT back home, dug up Dan's flower beds, and planted a pitfall trap that I found in the woods. You should have seen his face when he fell straight in! It was hilarious!

NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL



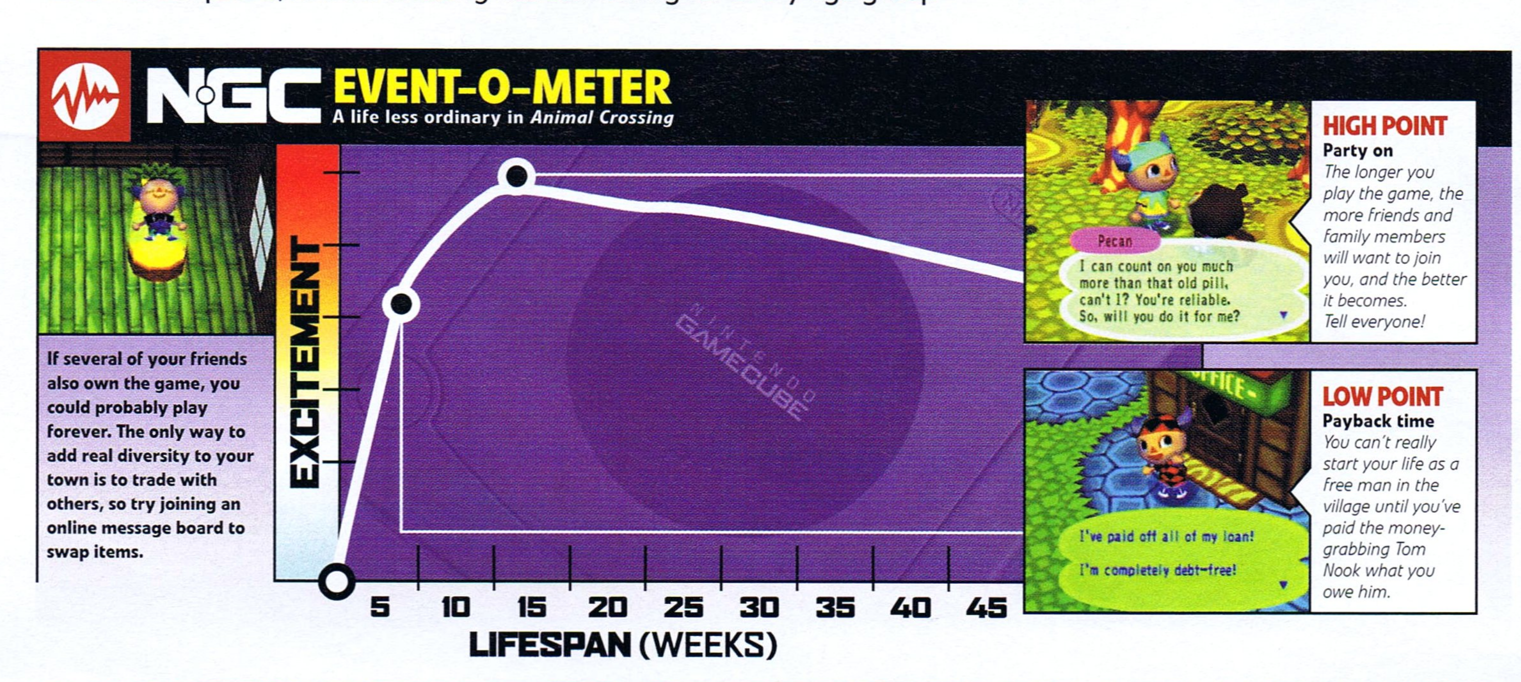
DEAR MUM, Dan chopped down my pear tree and left me a note saying if anything like this ever happens again, he'll burn my house while I sleep. He has no sense of humour.

WELL, HE won't be here long enough to try.s I posted a note pretending to be from Tom Nook, telling him he was being evicted for having fleas and being so disgusting. He he!

THAT WASN'T a massive success, and the next day I found some of the things he'd stolen from outside my house, just chucked on the rubbish dump. This called for decisive action.

I WROTE two letters. One to the psychotic toad, with whom I was now good friends, and the other to Dan, warning him to get out before it was too late. I hate the sight of blood.

"Like The Simpsons, *Animal Crossing* has something for every age group"





- Feels like you're part of a community.
- Link-up options.
- Incredibly funny.



- Low-res graphics.
- Lots of fetching and carrying.
- Only on US import.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Harvest Moon 64
Natsume
NGC/39 90%
Farming life for owners of imported N64 consoles.




6 VISUALS
Cute and functional. Does the job a little better than on the N64.

8 SOUNDS
Wonderfully catchy tunes and cute animal blabbering.

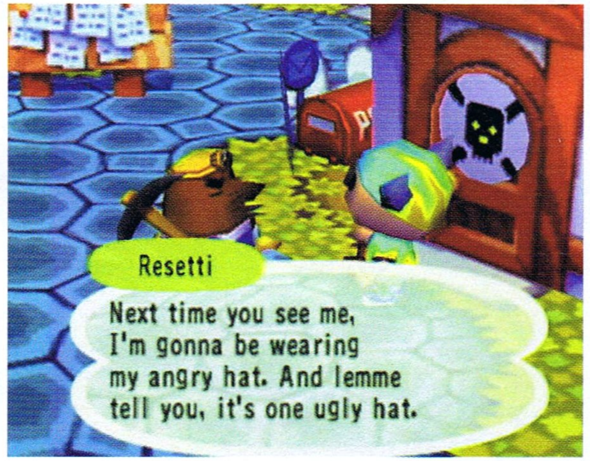
9 MASTERY
Makes genuinely innovative use of the hardware available.

9 LIFESPAN
The more people play, the longer you'll keep this disc in your cube.

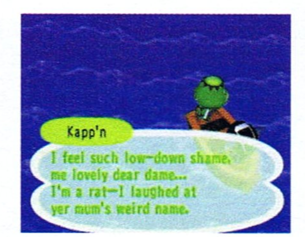
VERDICT
Not wishing to sound too soppy here, this is a magical experience. If only they had games like this when we were at school.













△ Dan imprisons an islander before digging up her flowers and stealing her coconuts. The cad.

Once you've created your dream village, you can invite your friends to take a look around, maybe do a little shopping, collect some fruit, check out your house, leave a note on the town noticeboard, and talk to your new animal pals. If you can't swap memory cards with anyone else, you can always send them gifts using a password system, which means you're able to trade items with people on internet message boards or just over the phone.

There are four save slots on the dedicated memory card included with the game, and it's specifically designed to be played by more than one person. The idea is that you leave buried treasure for your neighbours, or post them presents such as interesting items you think they might like. It may sound like the kind of thing that's only going to appeal to small children, but it's kept everyone in the office enthralled over the last few weeks, often doubled up with laughter at the adult-oriented jokes and mild innuendo scattered liberally throughout one of Nintendo's best-written games to date. Like The Simpsons, it has something for every age group.

Despite being an update of an N64 game, it makes incredibly good use of the new possibilities offered by Gamecube. You can hook up a GBA to download NES games, the pattern designer, or a miniature copy of your holiday island, as well as upload things and unlock secrets using the eCard reader. The Gamecube's internal clock plays a big part too, as the whole thing takes place in real-time – miss a few days and not only might you have missed some events or activities, your new friends may also be offended because you haven't visited them.

It looks simple, and it sounds like it's for pre-teens, but it's the most unique thing Nintendo have released in years. We demand a UK release now! Now!

MARTIN KITTS



RETRO GAMING

There are plenty of NES games included, but you'll have your work cut out trying to find them. You get two on the dedicated memory card – we got* Excitebike *and* Balloon Fight*, which were pleasant surprises compared to the folks upstairs at* Edge *magazine, who got* Tennis *and* Donkey Kong Jr Math*. The games can be traded with friends and others can be unlocked via a GBA and some special eCards.

"IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S FOR KIDS, BUT THIS IS THE MOST UNIQUE THING NINTENDO HAVE RELEASED IN YEARS"

ALWAYS SAVING YOU CASH!

Because our reviews are the best and most honest in the business, we promise you'll never waste a penny thanks to our Essential list, which keeps you in touch with the best games money can buy...

NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY...

FIVE GREAT RARE GAMES WE'LL NEVER, EVER SEE...

All of these you will never see. Or get to play. Well, you will, but they'll be on big discs, that only fit inside a big, black-and-green console... There just ain't no justice in this world.



PERFECT DARK 0



GOLDENEYE GC



KILLER INSTINCT 3



KAMEO



CONKER GC



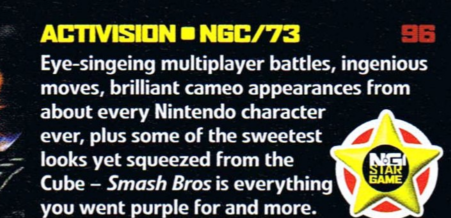
1 MARIO SUNSHINE

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73 96

The wait may have been long, but by Mike was it worth it. Mazza makes his first proper appearance on a Nintendo console in the follow-up to *Super Mario 64* – this time he's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island and trying to find out what evil villain put it there. With the same pick-up-and-play intuitiveness, polished Nintendo visuals, and sense of pure fun, this one pushes all the right buttons.



2 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/73 96

Eye-singeing multiplayer battles, ingenious moves, brilliant cameo appearances from about every Nintendo character ever, plus some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube – *Smash Bros* is everything you went purple for and more.

3 TIMESPLITTERS 2



EIDOS ■ NGC/73 91

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *TS2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre – and with *Perfect Dark* destined for the Bill Box, it looks as if it's here to stay.

4 WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM



NINTENDO ■ NGC/67 91

In PAL form this sodden sequel might suffer from some *tiny* frame-rate problems, but it's still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control, *Wave Race* is absolute magic.

5 LUIGI'S MANSION



NINTENDO ■ NGC/67 90

Mazza might have been late to the party this time round, but brother Luigi managed to ease the pain with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's maybe a bit short, but still ace.

6 RESIDENT EVIL

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72 89

The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Shame it still has the old-fashioned rotate-and-shoot control system from the dark PS One days, mind...

7 SUPER MONKEY BALL



SEGA ■ NGC/67 88

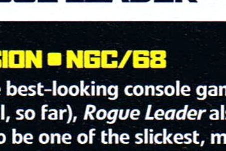
Ingenious update of *Marble Madness*, with simians rolling around strange landscapes trying to collect 'nanas. Chuck in a monkey version of *Mario Kart*, pool, some golf and a tilting boxing ring with springy boxing gloves and you've got the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube game out.

8 STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68 87

One of the best-looking console games ever made (well, so far), *Rogue Leader* also happens to be one of the slickest, most memorable Star Wars games of all time, bolting eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky smooth space battles. Get it in now.



9 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67 87

It's clearly a no-brainer of a PS2 conversion, but *Tony Hawk's 3* is so good it hardly seems to matter. Packed with unbelievable grinds and stunts, backed up by a mountain of hidden extras, and benefiting from vast skate parks, if you haven't tried *Hawk's* on for size before, now's the time.

10 SSX TRICKY





EA SPORTS ■ NGC/69 87

Like *Tony Hawk's*, this has got PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but it still manages to perform wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, brilliant shortcuts and secrets and some timely mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

11 BURNOUT





ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67 86

On the N64, we had to wait three years for a driving game. Now we've got a killer racer from day one: with lightning-fast, spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and one of the smoothest, most impressive engines around, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.



12 LOST KINGDOMS





ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70 86

Nerdy CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this surprisingly accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts. Try it and you just might get hooked.



13 PIKMIN





NINTENDO ■ NGC/69 85

Dreamily created using textures from Shigsy's own garden, *Pikmin* is a genius real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetables, beautifully simple controls and expansive, tactile worlds. It's over a bit quickly if truth be told, but don't let that put you off: this is Nintendo brilliance.



14 EXTREME G 3



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67 85

A bit of an underrated gem, *Extreme G 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, sprawling, well-designed tracks, some ingenious – and surprisingly tactical – weaponry and eye-spanking visuals. It's a tiny bit soulless, and the multiplayer's somewhat rank, but this is good stuff.

15 ISS 2



KONAMI ■ NGC/68 83

This once-untouchable football giant makes its debut on Gamecube sporting a few nasty cuts and bruises, including a lack of pace, huge turning circles and 'sweet spots'. Even so, it still rates as a majestic example of footie in a disc, even though an *ISS* with faults is hard to stomach.

16 AGGRESSIVE INLINE





ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72 81

Pleasantly surprising roller-skating game from the same stable as *Dave Mirra*, that sensibly uses the tried-and-tested *Hawk's* formula, while remaining more accessible than it. Massive, challenge-filled arenas, no time limits, and unique, 'jiggling' physics make this a real alternative to The Tonester.

17 CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO





CAPCOM ■ NGC/72 79

Not to everyone's tastes, but if you're in the mood for a two-dimensional retro smack fest, you've come to the right place. Make your mates feel pain with over 30 original pugilists from the elderly *Street Fighter* and *King of Fighters* series. Shame they couldn't have tidied up the graphics, though…

18 BEACH SPIKERS



SEGA ■ NGC/72 79

Ball game featuring rubbery ladies in skimpy bikinis squealing and smacking a pig's bladder over a net. *Beach Spikers* is far more than the sum of its parts, though – behind the vacuous exterior lies an addictive game of skill with cool real-time sand effects. Shame the 1-P ain't so good.

19 SMUGGLER'S RUN: WARZONES





ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/72 79

Fence illicit substances! The smuggling part of *Warzones* hides a game so shallow it's barely more than a tech demo. But what a demo! Gorgeously massive landscapes are yours to hare around in to your heart's content, in a selection of mad vehicles, which makes up for the lack of gameplay.

20 KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER





ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72 75

Gamecube's only surfing game so far, *Kelly Slater* is to *Tony Hawk's* what a wine-tasting holiday in Provence is to two weeks of self-abuse in Ayia Napa. Perform stunts on an endless half-pipe made of water – that's about as far as it goes, though. Surprisingly dodgy water effects, too.

EVERY GAMECUBE GAME EVER …RATED!



TUROK EVOLUTION



MX SUPERFLY



TETRIS WORLDS

Dave Mirra 2	NGC/67, 75
Turok Evolution	NGC/73, 71
Top Gun: Combat Zones	NGC/72, 71
WWE Wrestlemania X8	NGC/72, 70
Barbarian	NGC/72, 70
Batman Vengeance	NGC/67, 70
MX Superfly	NGC/73, 63
Driven	NGC/68, 60
Cel Damage	NGC/68, 60
Tarzan Freeride	NGC/67, 59
Spy Hunter	NGC/68, 55
Taz Wanted	NGC/72, 52
The Simpsons Road Rage	NGC/68, 52
Dark Summit	NGC/69, 51
Virtua Striker 3 v2002	NGC/69, 50
Eggo Mania	NGC/72, 49
Legends of Wrestling	NGC69, 47
Tetris Worlds	NGC/73, 38
ESPN Winter Sports 2002	NGC/67, 37
Donald Duck Goin' Quackers	NGC/68, 32
2002 FIFA World Cup	NGC/69, 30
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	NGC/68, 25
Mickey's Magical Mirror	NGC/73, 26
Universal Studios	NGC/67, 24
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	NGC/69, 20

GEAR

Feast your eyes on this spread of luxurious booty! We have many fine shiny peripherals for your perusal. And junk, too.



WHAT IS A BEST BUY?

Every month we'll pick out one piece of kit that stands head and shoulders above the rest and award it our coveted Best Buy badge. A Best Buy will combine superb quality with fantastic value for money – when we hand something a reward like that, you know it's worth investing in.

NGC BEST BUY

MULTILEAD

FROM LOGIC 3 ● £9.99

Now this we do like. As simple as it is, it works like a charm and gives out a surprisingly good quality picture. If you happen to have multiple consoles, or multiple tellys, you'll be aware of how annoying all those different leads can be. This essentially cuts down on the clutter behind your TV, and stops all your wires tangling by reducing everything down to the one lead.

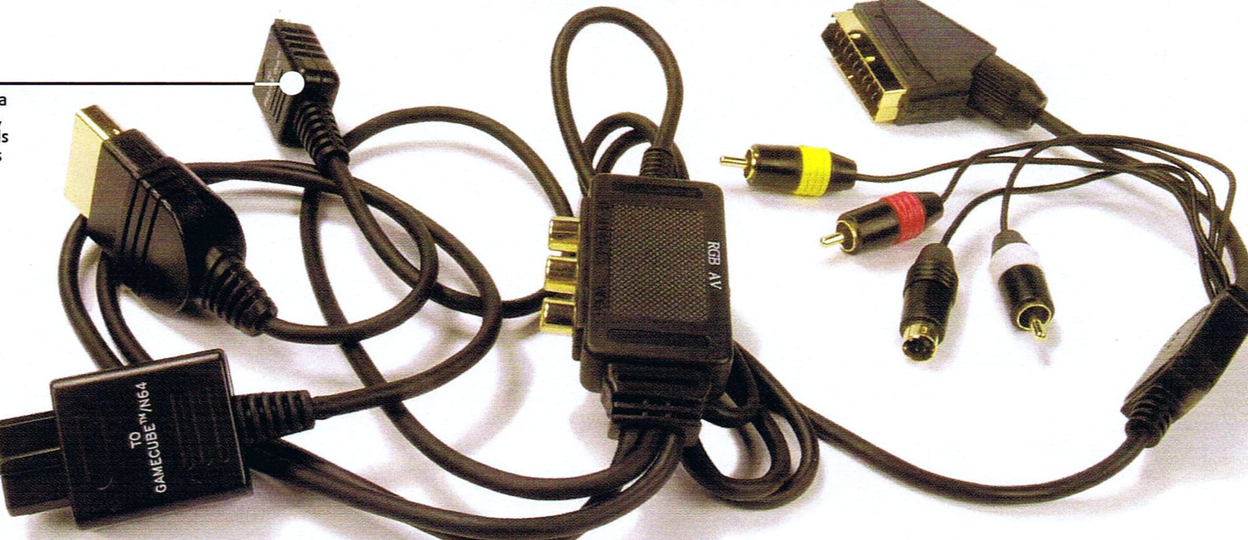
It's not the most exciting peripheral on the planet but it's a nice idea that's well implemented.

BETTER THAN...



HAVING LOADS OF TANGLED LEADS

It's the only lead of it's kind we've had in the office so far. Very practical indeed.



ARCADE STICK

FROM LOGIC3 ● £19.99

If you can't face forking out £130 for last month's superb X-Gaming Twin Arcade Stick, then this is as good as you're going to get – but that doesn't mean it's particularly good. The stick itself (which isn't adjustable) offers a fair amount of resistance, which may suit some tastes, but we weren't too enamoured. The buttons themselves are okay, too. They're a nice size, and are well placed for instinctive stabbing. Unfortunately, the overall quality of the device is suspect. It's not too weighty, it feels a little hollow, very like the plastic box that it is. Still, fairly easy on the wallet.

BETTER THAN...



COMBAT ARCADE STICK

FROM COMPETITION PRO ● £19.99

The bottom of the arcade stick pile, this. Cheap, nasty and devoid of any redeeming features. At all. Purchase at your peril.



ASCII PAD

FROM NINTENDO ● £60 approx

Quite pricey – especially as you can only really use it with *Phantasy Star Online*. Although most of you won't even want to consider this peripheral yet, it was so damn sexy we just had to tell you about it. It's basically an official joypad that's been stretched lengthways to accommodate a sweet-to-the-touch keyboard so that you can chat online without any hassle.

Okay, so it won't be out over here for ages, but a peripheral as superbly designed and built as this deserves maximum respect. A real thing of beauty.

BETTER THAN...



NOTHING

There's no competition out there at all – and there won't be for a long time, at least until *PSO* comes out over here. So if you're eager to import from Japan or the States, this is your only viable option.

COMBAT ARCADE STICK

FROM COMPETITION PRO ● £19.99

Sweet mother of Mary – this is actually a finished product! After only a brief caress of its lightweight frame we started to feel nauseous and somehow tainted, and after extended use the shameful truth became all too apparent.

In a word, this is dump. The stick is atrociously spongy. The buttons lack any kind of quality, and it if you threw it down the stairs not even that guy out of Rain Man would be able to count the pieces it would smash into. Utterly devoid of merit.

WORSE THAN...



A SICK GOAT

FROM A LEBANESE MARKET ● 2P

Or better than slicing your retinas open, sawing off your eyelids and bobbing for apples in a vat of vinegar… but only just.



GAMECUBE PAD

FROM COMPETITION PRO ● £14.99

As Jes put it, playing with this is "like touching dead skin". This is without a doubt the 'clammy hand' of joypads. The shape and feel of the thing is poor to say the least. The analogue stick feels too high in relation to the rest of the pad, the buttons feel horribly clunky, and the D-pad feels more like a button than a directional control. The mere sight of it in the office has gone and thrown Jud's Feng Shui all out of kilter.

WORSE THAN...



LOGIC 3 PRO PAD

FROM LOGIC 3 ● £14.99

And every third party pad ever created, for that matter. It's plainly, plainly wrong. W-R-O-N-G.



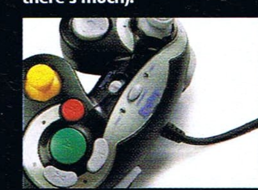
NGC ESSENTIALS



5.6" TFT MONITOR

JOYTECH ● £99

The sharpest, cheapest, biggest and best screen around so far. Absolutely no contest whatsoever (not that there's much).



PRO PAD

LOGIC3 ● £14.99

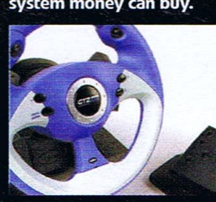
So far, the best third-party controller around – we'll be surprised if anyone beats it. It's sturdy, the analogue is almost perfect, and it's comfortable to hold. Lovely.



XA 3021 GAMING THEATRE

ALTEC LANSING ● £79.99

The design might not be to everyone's tastes, but there's no arguing with the sound quality. So far, this is the best system money can buy.



GTZ 500 RACING WHEEL

SAITEK ● £30

Not great, but still the best wheel available for the time being. Saying that, it's robust, and it handles well, although the button placement leaves a lot to be desired at times.

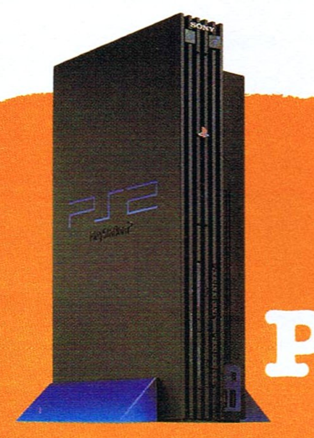


AFTER-BURNER

TRITON LABS ● £35

Most GBA lights don't require sawing, gluing and soldering to install, but once fitted there's no better lighting alternative to this.





XBOX?







PS2?

GAMECUBE?

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EXTENDED PLAY

IT'S A-ME



MARIO SUNSHINE

The second part of our massive *Sunshine* guide - we've got every Shine accounted for! P80

PHANTASTIC!



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

Your utterly complete guide to getting online with the Japanese version of the game… P102

I'M THE BEST

Your top scores, best times and general displays of gaming prowess. Are you the best? P92

COMPENDIUM

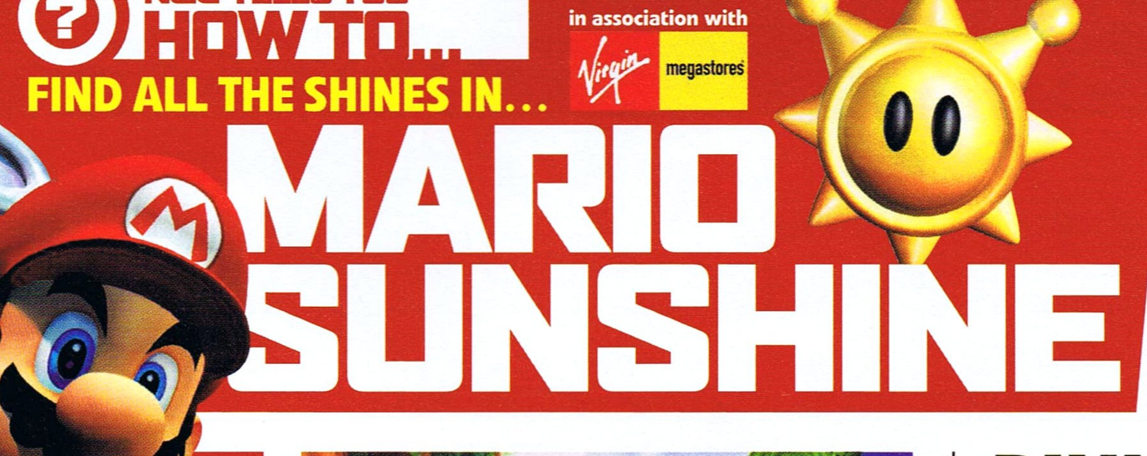
The evolution of football games, plus Ciaran Rooney from Bam Entertainment in Talk Time… P110

PLUS!

TIPS EXTRA

Get more from your games with Tips Extra – the latest cheats for the biggest games. P88

CONTENTS



NGC TELLS YOU HOW TO...

in association with Virgin megastores

FIND ALL THE SHINES IN...

MARIO SUNSHINE





Welcome to part two of our massive *Mario Sunshine* guide. More Shines to grab!

A QUICK RECAP...
Last month's guide covered the first few levels and playing techniques. To give some perspective of the game's structure, here's a complete level and item list that shows when and how to reach every area from Delfino Plaza. Some will only appear after you've unlocked others, so the Shine count shown is a minimum.

Delfino Plaza
Save the airstrip and collect one Shine.

Bianco Hills
Save the Pianta Statue and chase Shadow Mario.

Ricco Harbour
Collect three Shines and save the Blue Coin Exchange.

Gelato Beach
Collect five Shines and then save the Lighthouse.

Pinna Park
Collect ten Shines and approach the Koopa submarine on the quay. The red cannon is now open for business.

Sirena Beach
Requires Yoshi. He can eat the giant pineapple plugging the red pipe on the rooftops.

Noki Bay
Collect 20 Shines. Stand inside the column of light and look up at the sun with the Y-button view to enter the level.

Pianta Village
Requires the Rocket Nozzle. From the waterfalls at the base of the mountain, launch yourself up to the roof of the Shine Gate to find a red pipe.

Corona Mountain
Beat Shadow Mario in every world (all Shines complete). A flood unlocks the cave behind the Shine Gate.

Delfino Airstrip
Beat the final boss.

Yoshi
Get Shine four in Pinna Park.

Turbo Nozzle
Collect 25 Shines and have Yoshi.

Rocket Nozzle
Collect 30 Shines and have the Turbo Nozzle.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

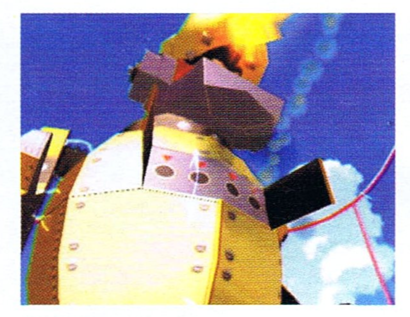
Mazza goes on a well-deserved holiday, but ends up having to clean up dirt. Much more fun that that sounds. The much-anticipated follow-up to *Mario 64*, *Sunshine* is more polished and more of the same – which can only be a good thing.

WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 73!

"Super Mario Sunshine is a genuine, utter delight to play, and the scope for exploration and discovery, for experimenting with the huge amount of moves and flexibility at your fingertips… it's breathtaking."

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **96**

PINNA PARK



SHINE 1
Mecha-Bowser Appears
It takes just three bottle rockets to defeat Mecha-Bowser, but don't be surprised if you fire many more, thinking you hit. The aim can be unpredictable during loops and the fairground itself may obscure your view. As you approach Bowser's jaws, either extinguish his fiery breath with your hose or (better still) hit him with a bottle rocket at the last moment to make his head spin, so that you slip past the flames. The Bullet Bills are your real enemies here, but you can explode them prematurely with the merest splash of your water cannon. Sometimes their jet whine doesn't give enough warning of their approach, so look for them between bottle rockets.

SHINE 2
The Beach Cannon's Secret
At long range, the Mole Cannon fires Bullet Bills in three different flavours. Purple bullets are homing missiles, and will chase you if they miss: so if you've been wondering how to get inside those blue coin baskets on the beach, try leading a purple bullet into one. All of the Bullet Bills can be destroyed with water, but the gold bullets are worth a ring of coins if sprayed. This is the best story for a 100-Coin Shine.

As you draw closer, the Mole Cannon will switch to lobbing Bob-Ombs. Freezing them temporarily with your hose grants you the chance to pick them up and throw them back, but make sure you hit the Mole and not just the Cannon (he'll retreat inside if you get too close). Three bomb strikes opens the cannon's warp entrance. The warp itself is a case of timed runs across vanishing platforms. Keep an eye out for the permanent egg blocks, and then use double or triple jumps to move quickly between safe spots.

NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!
SPIN JUMP
Remember, the direction of the stick when you hit A determines where you'll go. Tag a hover on the end for extra height.







SHINE 3
Red Coins of the Pirate Ships
The first coin is at the top of the steps to the galleon rides. The galleons make a soft swing, a long swing and then a complete loop on the third, so watch before jumping and you can ride the bow or stern to grab the next two coins. The remainder are on the green wire mesh, and if you fall off the galleons then it's easier to jump and hover to the green ramp from the brick ledge on the ferris wheel. If you need to reach that high cage from the green mesh underneath then think spin-jump plus hover. You can



remove the red Electro Koopas in your path by 'bumping' them safely from the other side of the green mesh. If they're walking on top of the mesh then hang underneath it, hand-swing to directly below them, and press A. If they're clinging to the underside, butt-slam from on top of the mesh.

SHINE 4
The Wilted Sunflowers
What look like giant Yoshi eggs are actually





the shells of Koopas trying to eat the sunflower roots. Spray the shell with water to wake one of the Koopas, then lure it into its bombing move. As soon as you see the shadow over you, run clear and then reverse flip so that you end up over the Koopa as it wedges itself in the sand. Then all it takes is a mid-air butt-slam on its belly to bury it for good. Repeat this until you've rescued all of the sunflowers.

SHINE 5
The Runaway Ferris Wheel
To earn your shine here you need to bump off the Electro Koopa at the top of the ferris wheel, and you do that by hanging underneath him and pressing A to flip the grate. It's how you get up to that tightrope directly below him that's the problem, though, and the obvious solution is to negotiate the platforms round the back where water and slopes rule out any wall-jumping. The secret of the marked panels is to spray them with either the squirt or the hover nozzle for a temporary rotation.

But it's far easier to avoid the work altogether and take the shortcut, which is to



walk all the way up to the rollercoaster ride (the bridge is now open), then take the green mesh ramp up to where Shine 3 appeared. From here, jump and hover over to the roof of the ferris wheel: you can slip straight through the spinning blue ironwork most of the time, then drop down to the tightrope. To reach your Shine, ride on top of a ferris wheel gondola.

SHINE 6
The Yoshi-Go-Round's Secret
Mario can still lose his cap in *SMS*: the fully-grown flying Goombas on Pinna Park beach will even steal it for themselves. Until it's recovered, Mario begins to suffer from sunstroke, that can only be prevented by frequent dips in the cool waters.

The Yoshi egg inside the park always asks for the pineapple you'll find just a little further up the path, but if you accidentally eat another fruit, look for another pineapple or lemon to change his colour. With an orange Yoshi only, step onto the

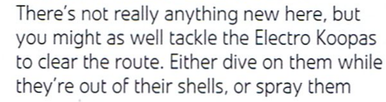




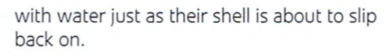


Yoshi-Go-Round and take the place of the missing ride to enter the warp stage.

A couple of triple jumps skip you through the first stretch. The next goal is to cross the orbiting block stream by moving from red to green, to black, to blue, jumping as the blocks pass, so that you can slip under the gaps in the central blue section of the dividing wall. Stay on the blue blocks for a 1-Up. You can get a helpful bird's-eye camera view on this section too. Finally, you'll need wall-jumps to reach the top of the block pile.



SHINE 7
Shadow Mario in the Park
There's not really anything new here, but you might as well tackle the Electro Koopas to clear the route. Either dive on them while they're out of their shells, or spray them



with water just as their shell is about to slip back on.

SHINE 8
Rollercoaster Balloons
Talk to the green Noki fellow at the start of the rollercoaster ride to begin the challenge. You have three circuits in which to shoot all of the balloons. When you're practising this ride, you should look out for lines of balloons where a single bottle rocket will shoot all the way through and pop two or more in one go.



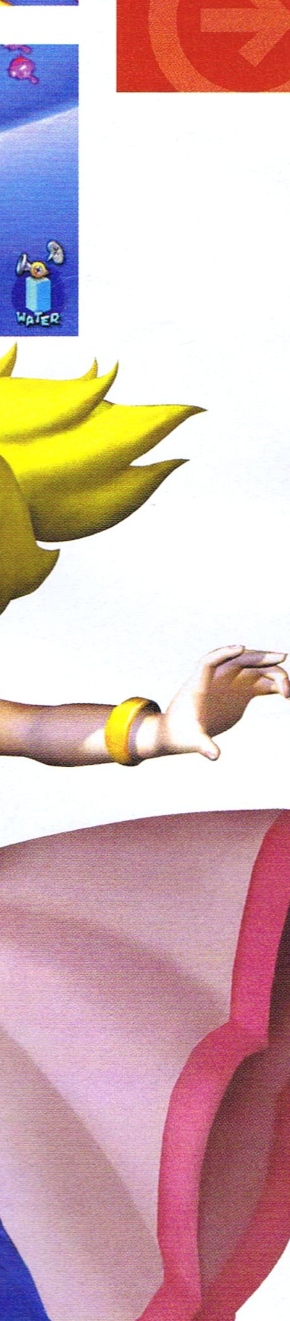






THOSE SECRET SHINES
***Secret Shine 1:** Repeat Shine 2's warp as a Red Coin Challenge.*

***Secret Shine 2:** Repeat Shine 6's warp as a Red Coin Challenge.*





SIRENA BEACH

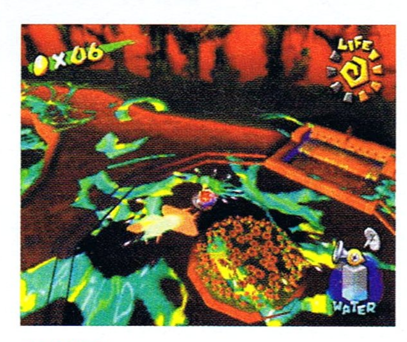
SHINE 1
The Manta Storm

The Manta boss won't actually appear until you talk to the manager of the hotel, who's standing on the large moated plaza where the hotel *should* be. So take this opportunity to clean up as much electric goop as you can, clearing yourself a fighting space at the back of the level, before refilling and talking to the manager. The boss divides into smaller manta rays with every squirt, each leaving a deadly electric trail. When all of the manta rays reach minimum size, they'll turn pink and start homing in on you from all directions. The best way to keep them at bay is to use a sprinkler move, rotating the analogue and hitting R to radiate a defensive circle of droplets. Run pressing R lightly to carve a safe path.

Another trick is to climb up a palm tree and shoot from the leafy canopy at the top. You're fairly safe here until they turn pink, but it's not terribly easy to aim, and you will need to get down again to refill your FLUDD. You might also want to save the coins on top as a means of regaining health.







SHINE 2
The Hotel Lobby's Secret

Spray the pink Boos and they turn into temporary platforms, granting you a means of climbing to the third storey of the hotel while the stairs are out. If you use spin jumps and the hover nozzle, you only need one or two Boos to move between floors. You can then hover into the Boo statue's mouth at the top of the central column to access the warp level.

This tricky retro warp starts with an old *Mario Bros* reference – time your jumps on the flying Goombas' heads to cross the long gaps – and then headbutt the brick blocks from underneath to gradually knock out a tall shaft that you can climb with wall jumping. When you reach the next solid structure, butt-slam the melon blocks to get down to the spinning cog.





SHINE 3
Mysterious Hotel Delfino

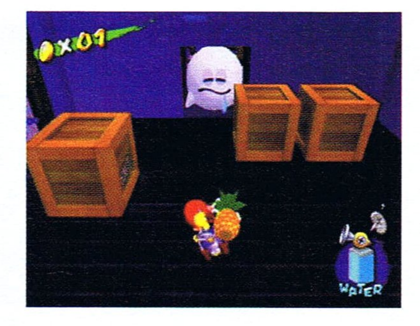
The Shine is in the pool room in the top floor, but you're not allowed through the door. The trick is to fall into the pool room through its ceiling, and if you enter the only other open room on this floor you'll find a bouncy bed that propels you into the hotel attic. Unfortunately, only Yoshi can remove the Big Boos blocking your path – and the Yoshi egg you'll find on the ground floor demands a pineapple.

To find a pineapple, you'll need to follow a sequence of hotel rooms via secret doors. **(1)** Go to the end cubicle in the Gents' loos on the ground floor and jump up the leaky wall to enter the bath on the middle floor. **(2)** Keep hosing the painting to reveal a Boo picture that you can jump through. **(3)** Keep splashing the revolving louvre doors until they form a complete picture of a Boo. **(4)** Transform the Pink Boos into platforms and jump up to the third floor. **(5)** Squirt the shelf unit to rotate it and then run underneath. **(6)** Although you can smash through the Dolpic poster to find another secret entrance, ignore it for the time being. Instead, look around for a pale floor tile and butt-slam it to drop to the storage room on the middle floor. **(7)** Pound the crates until you find a pineapple, then pick it up and leave by the ordinary door. Hatch the Yoshi and then take him up to the attic via the first bouncy bed. **(8)** Swallow the Big Boos with Yoshi's tongue. If he starts to run out of juice, you can find some more fruit to feed him with in the lobby. There are several cracked floor tiles in the rooms of the attic's maze that you can break with a ground-pound, and one of those nearby drops you into the pool room.











MARIO SUNSHINE

All Shines accounted for in the second massive *SMS* guide…

TOP TIP: SHINE 4

Work from the top row of tiles down, using the Y-button view and the slightest of squeezes on the R-button.





SHINE 4
The Secret of Casino Delfino

The door to the casino is on the ground floor, guarded by a bouncer. You need to rotate the wheels of the giant slot machines with your FLUDD until they both say 777. Expect to fight several Boo 'prizes' until your number comes up. Fortunately, the left-hand slot allows you to cheat by rotating the wheels individually with a brief squirt: you should use this same technique to solve the giant tile puzzle until it shows a complete Shine logo.

Once down the warp pipe, watch the sliding patterns of the puzzle cubes before making your move to avoid being scraped off the level. The worst part here is the last rotating cube in space, but finding a camera view that shows your Shine target ahead helps maintain perspective.

SHINE 5
King Boo Down Below

To find King Boo, butt-slam the strange purple tile on the casino's roulette wheel. King Boo spits little Boos if you do nothing, but these can be hosed away. His tongue wipes away any water or fruit you happen to land on him, but this also triggers the slot machine to spin and deliver its random prize, as follows:

Coins: Restore your health.





Water bubbles: Squirt to pop them and they'll often leave refill bottles.

???: Random monsters. They'll soon disappear if you keep them stunned for long enough, and destroying them also produces life-restoring coins.

Fruit: This is what you're after. Pick up a chilli pepper and throw it into King Boo to set his mouth on fire, then quickly grab a different fruit and lob that while his tongue is out of action. Three fruit hits will finish him off.

TOP TIP *instead of running back and forth in an effort to catch up with the fruit, butt-slam the purple tiles of the roulette wheels as they pass to stop them spinning.*

SHINE 6
Scrubbing Sirena Beach

Rather generously, you only need to clean up around 95 per cent of the goop to qualify within the time limit. So your tactic here is to ignore any tiny patches and move on, rather than fussing over spots. Don't just dive into the barrels provided, but stop to pick them up with B and carry them to where they can be thrown into the middle of the worst patches. When moving around, hold R lightly to keep a constant cleaning stream in front of you. You need to talk to the manager again to claim your Shine reward.





SHINE 7
Shadow Mario Checks In

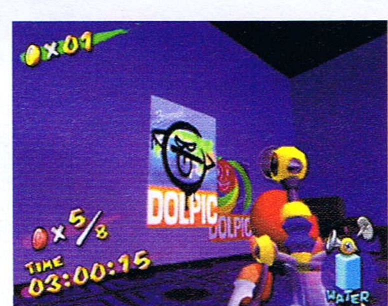
This chase is a little different as Shadow Mario leaves clones that will be revealed as Boos when sprayed. Also, the narrow passages of the upper floors make it easier for him to bump into you when he suddenly doubles back. Just take your time and shoot from a distance to be sure on this one.

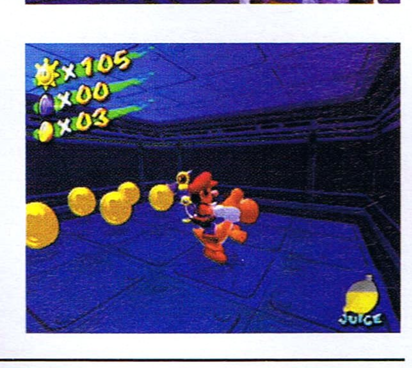


SHINE 8
The Red Coins in the Hotel

To find all of the coins in the hotel, think of the hidden rooms in Shine 3. There are no pink Boos to help you up any more, but you can reach the same area by entering the attic and taking the passage furthest from the janitor, heading for the corner gold coin room and slamming the cracked tile there. The coins are: **(1)** By the switch **(2)** In the Ladies' **(3)** On the middle floor **(4)** On the top floor **(5)** In the pool room **(6)** In the room after the Boo painting **(7)** Behind the Dolpic poster **(8)** In the pineapple storage room.









THOSE SECRET SHINES

Secret Shine 1: Repeat Shine 2's warp as a Red Coin Challenge.

Secret Shine 2: Repeat Shine 4's warp as a Red Coin Challenge.



NOKI BAY

SHINE 1
Uncork the Waterfall

Take the spiral shell staircase to start. The elevators are operated by shooting a jet of water into the cracked jars, filling them up just long enough to raise the platform you're standing on. As soon as you reach the cliffside, start looking out for goop graffiti and patterns on the walls above and below you.

Washing these away will cause more ledges to appear, making your route upwards much easier and enabling you to wall-jump between them in places. If you start to run out of water, try jumping on the little goop bubbles before they attack and you may win a water bottle.





The Mole Cannon boss shoots spiky paintballs until you get close, but otherwise needs to be defeated as before, by freezing his Bob-Ombs with water and lobbing them back at him. But be careful not to overshoot the fence when jumping to throw them or you could drop back to the bottom of the level. Three hits will pop his cork.



SHINE 2
The Boss of Tricky Ruins

Take the stepping-stones over to the old man and then spray the stone switch in the wall high above him to reveal an enormous wall-jumping course. When you get to the top, you'll need to swing the camera around and to the right to see the last shaft upwards. There's a second switch up top, and another wall-jumping course to negotiate until you reach the boss. This incarnation of Gooper Blooper is identical to









NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

1-UP MUSHROOM

So you thought only coins could heal you? Grab a 1-Up mushroom and it will completely restore your health bar.

that in Ricco Harbour. Spray him to make his tentacle lashes miss, then grab one and pull with B held down until it snaps. Clean his face and then pull his nose cork, after which he'll unload a circle of oily goop. Repeat the process and then fall down the hole below him to reach the Shine cave. (While you're here, try spraying some of those ancient jars too.)

SHINE 3
Red Coins in a Bottle

You pick up some new diving gear here, effectively turning your hover nozzle into a jet-pack. You'll also have to contend with rising jet streams, so descend away from them and then move in to catch the red coins at the top of the lines of gold coins. Finally, search the stone ruins at the bottom of the jar: one is hidden in a stone niche.





SHINE 4
Eely-Mouth's Dentist

Once you've entered the second section of this level through the underwater pipe, Eely-Mouth will begin his cycle of rising, letting off poisonous purple toxin bubbles, and sinking. There are only two useful tactics here: the first is to stick with your hover nozzle and hang above the eel's teeth to clean the gunk from them, brushing away the dark coating with your jets. The second is to keep an eye on your oxygen meter and dash for the gold coins around the side of the level when it sinks below halfway. Then return and continue the cleaning process, rising with him to avoid being swallowed,



and finish cleaning all of his teeth. Even when he's finished, make sure you have enough oxygen left to sink to the bottom and manoeuvre towards the loose gold tooth that becomes the Shine.

SHINE 5
Il Piantissimo's Surf Swim

The first time you race Il Piantissimo on this course, he'll actually seem quite slow in taking his long route. If you use a land course rather than water, sticking to the floating podiums and hovering to cross, you should beat him quite easily.





SHINE 6
The Shell's Secret

On the Shine 1 side of the bay, the end of the cliff features ornate green ledges. Climb them by spin-jumping and hovering, plus via the springboard provided, to find a rocket nozzle box. This will let you reach the warp entrance from one of the lowest, safest tightropes. Otherwise, you might try climbing the first shell tower to its spiral pinnacle and crossing its highest tightrope to the domed tower. From there, a guided drop and a hover down to the tightrope below will put you on track to the conch tower. However, you should note the tendency for some of those Sparks to chase you.

The nerve-shattering warp stage challenges you to wall-jump like a pro from the very start, where it's needed to get out of that glass case. Then use a triple-jump to make the height and distance to the first giant piston block. After you climb the pole, walk to the end of the tightrope and, from there, run up the furthest arrow on the slope – don't stop until you get to the narrow landing at the top, as this bit is pretty slippery. If you're puzzled by the following wooden platforms being so high, the trick is to make diagonal wall-jumps to gain enough height without falling down the hole – and it helps to start with a spin jump. Evil, very evil. You can try spin-jumping from on top of the nail if you want – but believe us, it's no easier.

NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

HOVER CLIMB

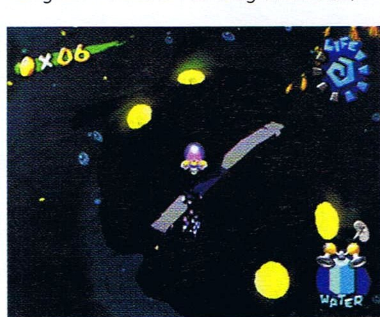
When hovering to climb a higher platform, Mario will be able to grab on as soon as his cap draws level with the ledge.

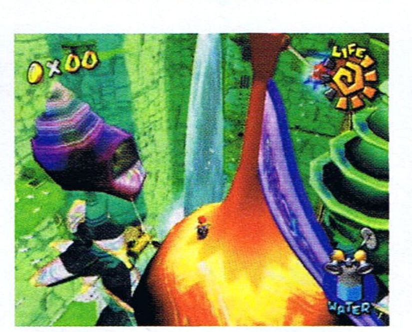
SHINE 7
Hold It, Shadow Mario!

There's nothing special about this chase, bar the mountaineering.

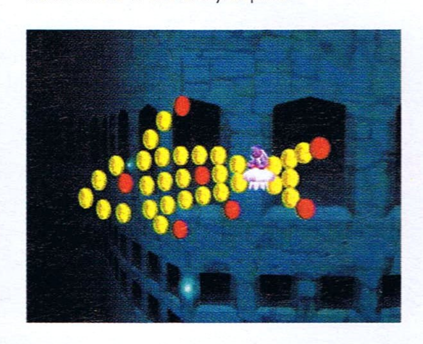
SHINE 8
The Red Coin Fish

Re-enter the sea floor section where you previously tackled Eely-Mouth. The Noki people's gift is a constellation of red and gold coins that, once every orbit, breaks up and scatters before reassembling. This is mostly a matter of perseverance, waiting for the fish to re-appear and getting your bearings as quickly as possible, so you will need to make regular trips to the coins around the walls for an oxygen boost. You should also top up your meter before going to fetch the Shine itself. If you're struggling to turn by wrestling with both stick and camera, try holding down the L-button to gain better control of your movement: it's very easy to get confused and disorientated down there in the briny depths.









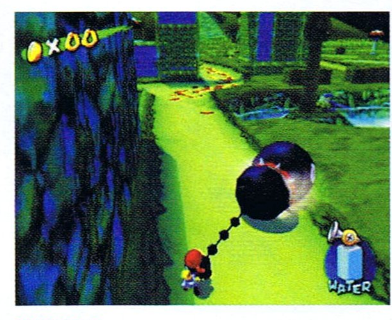


THOSE SECRET SHINES

Secret Shine 1: Repeat Shine 6's warp as a Red Coin Challenge.

Secret Shine 2: In the cliff face on the left of the bay is a tall green shaft where you can wall-jump up to a secret entrance. Follow it to find another entrance in the face of the cliff and, once inside, you'll be propelled upwards to a plateau. Spot the golden bird? Drench it until it surrenders a Shine.

PIANTA VILLAGE



SHINE 1
Chain Chomplets Unchained

When the Chomplets are doused in water, they'll turn black and run away. At this point, you can grab their stretchy tails with B and pull, then aim and release to watch them shoot off in the chosen direction. But they'll soon start burning again if left alone, so to permanently cool their flames you need to twang them into the pool at the base of the Great Tree. Repeat for all three and the Shine is yours. The best tactic is to wait around by the pool itself, use your hose to keep the area fairly clean of fiery goop, then squirt and nab each one when they draw close.

SHINE 2
Il Piantissimo's Crazy Climb

As always, use repeated B-button flops to speed yourself up, and use jumps to cross obstacles. If Piantissimo beats you, just exit the area rather than finish second, or you'll lose one of your lives.



SHINE 3
The Goopy Inferno

Shadow Mario steals your FLUDD on this level, but you'll find it in the centre of the village. Head anticlockwise around the outside of the village until you meet a Pianta on the far side who'll tell you about the pit that the Mayor uses. Slam through the bottom and start swinging to the sliding grille. The trick to these sliders is to start them with a B punch, then be ready to hit A as soon as they slam to a standstill. Don't move until the thing has dropped away or you may accidentally grab it again. Follow the trail of coins until you can drop down onto a swing, then jump over to the mushrooms. A bouncy green mushroom will propel you back up to the climbing mesh. After the next slider, look for another grille and use A to flip it, then wall-jump out of the pit. You'll see a series of spots in the goop that you can use to cross safely towards the golden mushroom. Your FLUDD is at the bottom, and with a spin-jump plus hover you can get on top of the golden mushroom to hose down the Mayor.





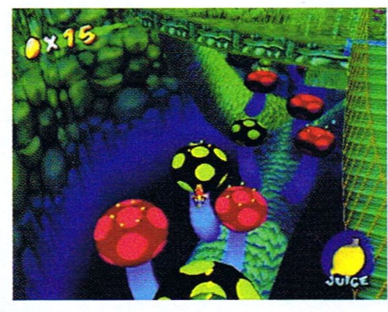
SHINE 4
Chain Chomp's Bath

In the top-left of the village is a Pianta statue overlooking a hot spring. Notice how the spring's basin is perfectly hemispherical? The perfect shape to contain a Chain Chomp, no less… Uproot the end of the Chomp's holding chain with B so that it can roam free, then let it loose and get yourself over to the hot spring. Wait until it wanders past the gates, then give it a good soaking to cool it down and make it sluggish. Now you can grab its chain and drag it all the way inside the spring before it recovers.



TOP TIP: *you don't need to throw the water barrels at the Chomp. Leave one in its path by stopping and pressing B to put the barrel down. Your little water-trap will burst open as soon as the Chomp steamrollers over it.*

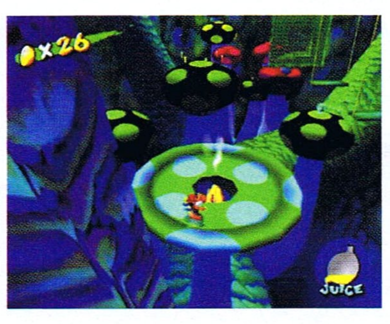




SHINE 5
Secrets of the Village Underside

The small tree nearest the hot spring hides a number of fruits under its leaves. Grab one to wake the Yoshi egg at the level entrance, then ride back over the rickety rope bridge and drop down to the mushrooms as indicated by the line of coins. Use Yoshi's glide to cross from mushroom to mushroom, then spit away the yellow goop barring the warp stage access.

Some Chucksters will catapult you straight up, but most of them will lob you directly behind them – the way you're facing when you talk to them. So the trick to this is to make sure you only talk to them when you're precisely lined up in the direction you want to go. Also, make sure you catch the moving ones when they're at the edges of platforms, or their throw may land short.



SHINE 6
Piantas In Need

Keep spraying the Piantas until you actually see them sparkle and jump for joy. The time limit is generous enough for you to talk to them and grab some blue coins.

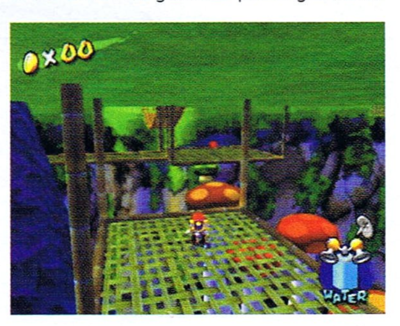


SHINE 7
Shadow Mario Runs Wild

A nasty twist on this chase is that your evil double leaves a trail of fiery goop. To dodge the breezy whirlwinds, jump when you hear the rustling noise they make before their attack rush.

SHINE 8
Fluff Festival Coin Hunt

This time, the red coins are rather well-hidden. Here's where to look: **(1)** The village underside. Go for this one first, as it's where you're most likely to tumble to your doom. **(2)** In the basin of the hot spring. **(3)** Under the bees' nest behind the big tree by the hot spring. **(4)** Under the fruit tree. **(5)** In the grass on the left side of the village. **(6)** Break open the crate pile on the right side of the village. **(7)** On a leaf of the big tree at the level entrance. If you line up facing the rickety rope bridge and do a triple jump, you can reach it without having to climb the tree's slippery trunk. **(8)** Use spin-jump and hover to climb the fungus platforms of the Great Tree at the centre of the level. When you reach the rocket nozzle, boost up to the highest platform and then perform a double or spin-jump so that the rocket boost tags onto the end. This way, you can just reach the leafy canopy of the tree, and the last coin is on top of the tree house. Wander out to the end of the giant leaf pointing towards it, and watch for a while to see how some fluffs shoot straight out towards the distant cloud. Grab that fluff by its tail so it takes you out to the cloud, then jump off before it disintegrates.





SECRET SHINE 1
Do Shine 5's warp as a Red Coin Challenge.

SECRET SHINE 2
Repeat the Coin 8 route of Shine 8 until you're on the treehouse. Holding down Y, hose the sun in the sky for a Shine logo.



CORONA MOUNTAIN

Try not to lose your hose during the first section. If you restart this level quickly after dying, remember to switch nozzles before leaping! The best way to make the burning platforms safe is to hover directly over them until your jets extinguish the flames. Then drop and look for the next spike platform. To approach the spike platforms, you should be jumping towards them while the spikes are still up, and keep hovering over them until they vanish. The small spike tips won't hurt, they're just a warning to get off. Be sure to visit the small fountains here as hovering will quickly empty your FLUDD.

The boat is remarkably unstable, so you can't afford the slightest bump against any obstacle. Take it slow and easy, and pass under the steaming jets every so often to refill. Your eventual goal is the island surrounded by blue coins, where you'll also find a rocket nozzle. Use it to ascend to the cloud platforms above you – the best way is to get an overhead view, and then start powering up your rocket while checking that you can see your shadow though the target cloud. Then pile straight through the cloud from underneath and you'll land safely. When you finally shoot into the dark cloud at the top, you'll be warped to the final boss.

TOP TIP *you can make your cloud platform bigger by switching to the squirt nozzle and watering it. This gives you a brief chance to improve your position before boosting.*





FINAL BOSS!

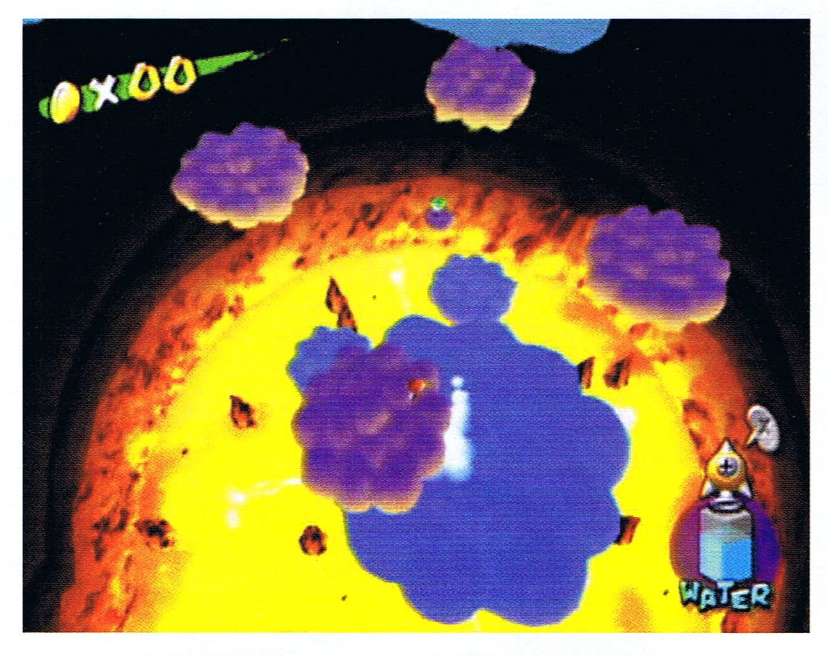
The technique needed here is to ground-pound with the L-button at the peak of a rocket boost. The correct places to do this are marked out by red and yellow flame symbols, and they're arranged around the arena like the points of a Shine. As soon as you've smashed one, clamber back up to the perimeter before the ground gives way beneath you. If you end up falling with it, a last-second rocket boost may sometimes save you.

A fiery breath weapon is normally directed against you as you run to the next symbol, and a trick here is to start running one way and then switch direction: you can normally fool the boss into scorching the route you abandoned. Alternatively, spray the boss in the face. The only other real danger comes from the Bullet Bills, but if you jump before impact you can land on their heads and bop them. Spraying them and the smaller boss who fires them is also an option, but for the aiming involved it's often a better idea just to get on with the job as quickly as possible.

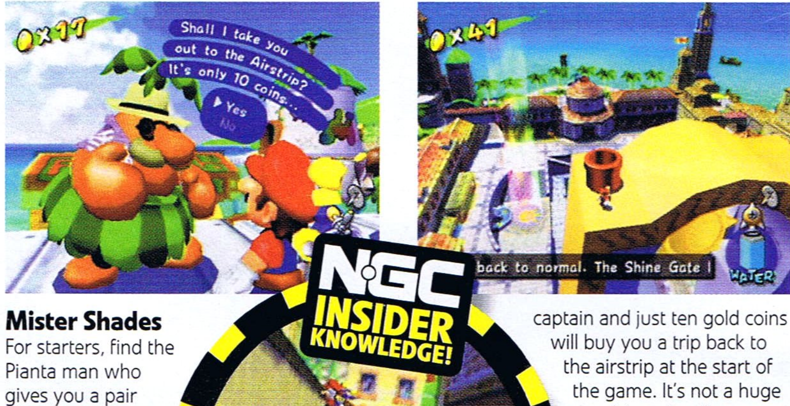
When the fifth section eventually crumbles, you'll be propelled into the end sequence. Time to sit back and watch the holiday snaps…

GAME OVER?

You may not have collected all 120 Shines yet, but there are still small rewards for beating the game.







Mister Shades

For starters, find the Pianta man who gives you a pair of shades after 30 Shines. Having finally enjoyed a holiday on completing the game, Mario's now entitled to look like a tourist…

NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

DOUBLE WALL-JUMP

By changing the direction of the stick by 90°, you can do a double wall-jump in a corner without a facing wall.

Red Coin Challenges

Re-enter any of the warp stages and you'll find a red switch to reveal the red coins in a time trial. But now that Shadow Mario has been beaten, there's nobody` to steal your FLUDD. Better still, you get to keep the nozzles you entered with: the hover still makes most jumps much easier, of course, but if you fancy packing a rocket nozzle instead then give it a go.

BONUS AREA
Delfino Airstrip

There's a new ferryboat on the quay down by the Blue Coin Exchange. Talk to the captain and just ten gold coins will buy you a trip back to the airstrip at the start of the game. It's not a huge level, but there's one more Shine to grab here. Gold coins will add towards your Delfino Plaza total, so watch those extra lives clock up.

SHINE 2
Red Coin Challenge

Grab the turbo nozzle and then line yourself up, facing the tower. As soon as you hit the red switch, turbo through both saloon doors for the first coin inside. The other seven coins are easily found – you merely need to follow the gold coin route across the sea and then back to the runway. And that's your lot!

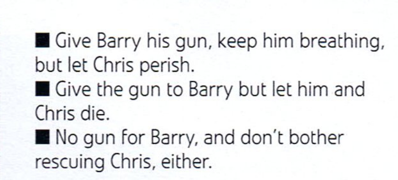


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THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR
THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



YOUR MOST WANTED TIPS

RESIDENT EVIL

To witness the splendour of the alternative endings to GC's finest splatter-fest, take note of the following:

PLAYING AS JILL

- Give Barry his gun back, make sure he stays alive, and then rescue Chris before the end. Easy!
- Give big Bazza his gun back, but this time let him die at the heliport. You need to let Chris live, though.
- Deprive the boy Barry of his gun, and once again make sure Chris is rescued.
- Give Barry his gun, keep him breathing, but let Chris perish.
- Give the gun to Barry but let him and Chris die.
- No gun for Barry, and don't bother rescuing Chris, either.

PLAYING AS CHRIS

- Rescue Rebecca, keep her alive, and rescue Jill.
- When she screams, come to Rebecca's aid, but let her die at the heliport. Keep Jill alive.
- Let the young Rebecca come to a horrible end, but rescue Jill.
- Rescue and keep Rebecca alive, but let Jill pass away.
- Let both girls die.

Extra game modes are revealed when you do the following:

HARD MODE

Complete the game on any setting in any amount of time.

ONCE AGAIN MODE

Beat the game on any difficulty in any length of time.

REAL SURVIVAL MODE

To disable the auto-aim and remove linked item boxes, beat Once Again mode on normal or hard difficulty level.

INVISIBLE ENEMY MODE

For no auto-aim and invisible foes, including bosses, beat Real Survival mode or complete Once Again mode with both characters.

NEW TITLE MODE

Beat the game once.

MESSAGE FROM MR MIKAMI

Complete Invisible Mode in less than five hours for a special message from the game's creator.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

Pressing down on the D-pad will make Captain Olimar invincible in Pikmin.
Stacey Bloom, Derby

Once you've shot a zombie in Resident Evil, stab it in the face with your knife to make sure it's really 'dead'.
Ian Fitch, Bath

ETERNAL DARKNESS

SECRET ENDING

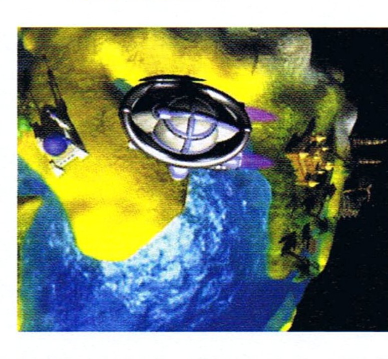
To view the secret ending, defeat Pious with each of the three alignments on the same save file.

CREDITS

Completing the game once on any alignment adds a Credits option to the main menu.

JUMP TO CHAPTER

Finish the game twice and you'll see a Jump To Chapter option appear, which allows you to skip straight to your favourite sections.



ETERNAL MODE

Once you've completed the game for the third time you'll unlock Eternal Mode, which grants you unlimited health, magick and that all-important sanity.

ZOOCUBE

Unlock the following extra difficulty modes:

- **Gold** Beat Pacific Ocean on Classic.
- **Platinum** Complete all stages up to Pacific Ocean in Gold mode.
- **Secret Gulf Of Mexico Level** Complete Pacific Ocean on Classic.
- **Warp Speed Option** Complete every stage on Platinum mode.

RED CARD SOCCER

SECRET TEAMS

To play as the Ape, Dolphin, Martian, Matador, Samurai and swanky SWAT teams in their respective stadiums, simply beat World Conquest mode with the team of your choice.





YOUR TOP TIPS Share the knowledge and bag yourself a prize...

Found an interesting cheat, tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Then send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. In return, if your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a Gamecube game of your choice. Sound good? Then don't hesitate – DO IT!

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS



Name ....

Address ....

..................Postcode..................

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room.

READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

So here it is: tippage by you lot. Top Tip wins a game from The Drawer – simple as that. Got an original tip? Use the form on the previous page, then!



1. SUPER MONKEY BALL

Level skip

On Level 18, don't bother frantically chasing after the moving goals – just drop off to the left from the start and then wait for the lead red gate to come to you! You'll then warp straight to level 25. Wick-a-mondo!

Laurie Crouch, Herts

2. SONIC ADVENTURE 2: BATTLE

Double Trouble

If you have two spare memory cards you can use them to double your money! If you have 20,000 rings on one card, copy the data to the other then spend the original amount. After that, just copy the data back from the spare card to the first one to get your cash back!

Dean Bannister, Dunston

3. LUIGI'S MANSION

Grave Diggin'

When running low on energy, simply return to the graveyard and hit all the gravestones to top yourself back up to 100 per cent.

James Ruddy, Scotland

4. BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY

Spinning Around

Swirling the stick around and around then pressing X when in Beast or Hyper-Beast mode allows you to pull off some amazing moves.

John Beard, Gloucestershire

5. SUPER SMASH BROS

Roy's Blazer

On event match 28, playing as Roy, stand on the highest section of the level and keep pulling off the blazer attack, by using up and pushing B. You can't fail to win using this method. Wah!

Neil Bonwick, Surrey

6. SUPER SMASH BROS

Watch the ball

If you find yourself on the receiving end of an electrode from a pokéball, stand on top of it until it turns black, and then hit A. You should pick it up, allowing you to return it to your mate, or just fling it out of the way. Be quick, though, as it has a very short fuse at this point.

Simon Vickers, Gillingham

7. SUPER SMASH BROS

Going Down

If you find yourself with a high damage rating, try holding down so you won't fly as far when someone hits you.

Adam Roche, Ireland

8. ISS 2

Dip Dip Dive

When in possession of the ball press B, A, Y and X together to pull off a dive!

Harry Premachandralal, Surrey

9. SUPER SMASH BROS

Kirby Bomb

When your opponents are near a bomb, fly above it and then press B and down. This will cause the bomb to explode, leaving you unharmed.

Joe Orton, Nuneaton

10. CEL DAMAGE

The Kitchen Sink

Enter ENCHILADA as your name to unlock absolutely everything.

Paul Nutterfield, Ireland



DR KITTS' GAME CLINIC

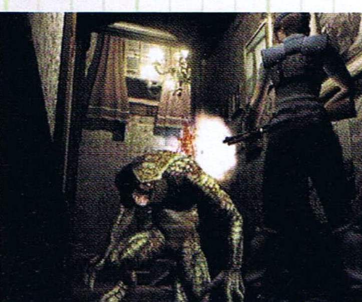
Open your mouth and say 'ah'. No, not "aaaaaggghhhh!". Just 'ah' will do.



Dr Kitts,
I've always loved the *Turok* games, but I'm finding the enemies in the GC version a bit hard to take care of as they soon swarm the screen and overpower me. Any tips for a first-person-shooter-loving lass?
Anne-Marie Jones, via email

Dr Kitts takes a midnight phone call from George W Bush…
My dear, what you need to do is take care of the foes closest to yourself first, as they generally (as a rule) pose the greatest danger to your health. However, should a sniper raise his sneaky head on the scene, then focus all your armoury attentions on the space between his beady eyes.

Dr Kitts,
Resident Evil on the Gamecube is wonderful, but I'm finding the characters' attire a little drab, to be honest. Is there any truth in the rumour about there being alternative costumes to unlock?
Mike Ferguson, Edinburgh



Dr Kitts inadvertently finds himself on the cover of Heat magazine…
So, you fancy yourself as a bit of a fashionista, do you? What you'll need to do is complete the game once on any difficulty setting, which will give you a closet key. This will open a door in the mansion's first floor, in the back room of the area where you find the 1F map. Inside that are the clothes to dress you up in your love, as some singing floozy used to say.

Dr Kitts,
I know this sounds pretty lame, but I just can't beat the first boss on *Mario Sunshine*. Help me! Please!
Alex Hawk, Bromley

Dr Kitts rearranges his spice rack into alphabetical order…
What you need to do to defeat the Goopy Piranha Plant is to spray all the way around the middle part of the paint, and then fill in the middle. This way the sludge on the outside will be gone. Then it's simply a matter of hitting him in the sloppy chops with your spray three times whenever he opens his mouth.



Dr Kitts,
My request is a simple one: where do I find the mythical elephant gun in *Eternal Darkness*? It's important to me.
Ben Fellowes, East Croydon

Dr Kitts puts a ton on the nose at the 4.10 from Newmarket…
The exquisite ivory elephant gun is to be found in Chapter 10. To get it you'll need to run upstairs after the vampire attacks the servants and head to the master bedroom. Save the servant from the fanged fiend to get the gun cabinet key from him. The gun is in the smaller bedroom.



The dark, sinister power of numerals harnessed for gaming success…

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

CHEAT CODES

- Low-Gravity Wallrides: enter **U, D, U, D, L, R, L, R, A, B, A, B, Start** on the cheat menu.
- Unlock Every Character: **D, R, D, L, D, L, D, R, R, R** on the cheat menu.
- Unlock Power Skates: Re-enter a completed level to pick up the power skates.
- Unlock Ultra Skates: Complete all the levels with 100 per cent.

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES

NEW PLANES

To unlock all those fancy planes and all the levels in this so-so flight sim, simply enter your name as **SHPONGLE**. Then you can fly with the best of the best. Yes.

BEACH SPIKERS

- Enter **PHANTA2** to get *Phantasy Star Online* uniforms 114 and 115, hair 77 and face 53.
- Enter your name as **OHTORI** in the World Tour Mode to unlock Sega uniforms 116 and 117.
- Enter **DAYTONA** to unlock Daytona USA uniforms 107 and 108.
- Enter **FVIPERS** as a password to unlock uniforms 109 and 110, hair 75 and face 51.
- Enter **ARAKATA** as a password to unlock uniforms 111, 112 and 113, hair 76 and face 52.
- Enter your name as **JUSTICE** to unlock the *Virtua Cop* uniforms 105 and 106, plus sunglasses 94.
- Completing all of the Training sessions will unlock uniforms 71 to 86.
- The Pringles, Holiday Inn, Nissan and Nintendo stages can all be unlocked after playing a match on them during the World Tour. To use them in Arcade mode, hold down **R** when you select Arcade mode. Then hold down **L** and **R** when the round number is announced in the World Tour mode to open the performance meter. This awards you points based on your serve and spike performance.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM

Enter these codes on the title screen:

- Citizen Kane mode: **X, Y, X, Y, X, Y, L, R, L, R, L, R**
- 8-ball mode: **R, Right, Up, Up, Y, Y**
- All alternative teams: **X, Y, Down, Down, Down, Down**
- Angus' items: **Left, X, Right, X, Up**
- Arsenault's items: **Left, Y, Up, Y, Down**
- Boomer's items: **Left, Y, Left, X, Up**
- Dante's items: **Left, X, Right, Y, Left**
- Djimon's items: **Left, Y, Down, Y, Up**
- Duke's items: **Left, Y, Up, X, Right**
- El Diablo's items: **Left, X, Right, X, Down**
- Half-Pint's items: **Left, Y, Up, X, Up**
- Kahuna's items: **Left, Y, Right, Y, Right**
- Kaimani's items: **Left, X, Down, X, Down**
- Kiril's items: **Left, Y, Up, X, Left**
- Lola's items: **Left, X, Left, Y, Down**
- Madeira's items: **Left, Y, Down, X, Up**
- Nova's items: **Left, Y, Down, Y, Right**
- Raine's items: **Left, X, Up, X, Up**
- Rico's items: **Left, X, Right, X, Right**
- Rumiko's items: **Left, Y, Left, Y, Up**
- Zari's items: **Left, Y, Left, Y, Right.**
- All items for all players: **Left, X, Left, X, Left**

ALTERNATE SOCCER BALLS

Enter the following codes to change the look of the soccer ball:

- Eyeball: **R, Right, Down Up, X, X**
- Black Box: **R, Right, Left, Left, Down, X, X**
- Rusty Can: **R, Left, Up, Up, Y, Y**
- Magic 8-Ball: **R, Right, Up, Up, Y, Y**
- Beach Ball: **R, Right, Right, Down, X, Y**
- Crate Ball: **R, Left, Down, Right, Y, X**
- Kid's Rubber Ball: **R, Right, Up, Down, X, Y**
- Old School Ball: **R, Right, Left, Left, Y, X**

ALTERNATIVE TEAMS

For different looking teams, enter the following on the title screen:

- El Fuego: **X, X, Down, Down, Right, Left**
- Spirit: **Y, Y, Down, Down, Left, Right**
- Sub Zero: **Y, Y, Down, Right, Left, Up**
- Toxic: **Y, X, Down, Down, Up, Up**
- Tsunami: **X, Y, Down, Up, Right, Left**
- Volta: **Y, X, Down, Up, Down, Up**
- Big Head Mode: **L, Up, Up, Y, Y**
- Big Hits: **L, R, Up, Up, X, Y**
- Hard Hit Mode: **L, R, Up, Up, X, Y**
- Unlock all stadiums: **R, R, Right, Right, Up, Up, Up, Up, X, X**



in association with



SEVEN-STONE GAMING WEAKLINGS! ENHANCE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL LIFE WITH I'M THE BEST!

I'M THE BEST



Lots of entries for the new leagues last month. We would have even put some on the tables. Thing is, last week we went on our bi-monthly excursion to Whispering Glades Residential Home to visit Geraint's Nanny Gimroo (she has a 60 per cent stake in Future Publishing, and it keeps her sweet and us in the will). We had tea and bourboun biscuits, and watched while Nanny, who's 97, smells of talcum powder, and is addicted to cough medicine, easily produced better *Smash Bros* scores than any we've yet received from you whipper snappers. So you're just going to have try harder. But thanks for all your suggestions anyway – we had so many for *Monkey Ball* and *Smash Bros* that we gave up trying to pick the best one and just tore the best ideas limb from limb, to build two hybrid challenges. Enough ideas and we could bump this thing up to four pages. Keep 'em coming, idjuts!

1





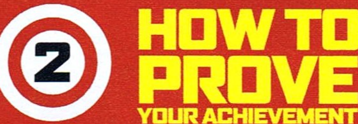
MORE NEW LEAGUES COMING YOUR WAY!

Well, here they are. Emerging bleary-eyed and short of breath from underneath an enormous pile of slightly stained envelopes, Geraint has finally selected a challenge worthy of inclusion in these here hallowed pages. So (drum roll), we're pleased to announce some new leagues for *Mario Sunshine*, that will henceforth be known as the **Simon Price** of **Reading** Commemorative Tables. For them, we want to see…

- Your best time on Il Piantissimo's Sand Sprint (Gelato Beach level).
- Your best time on Il Piantissimo's Crazy Climb (Pianta Village level).

Simon gets a set of the Altec Lansing Gaming Theatre speakers we reviewed in issue 71, and a special winner's hat that we made ourselves from a padded envelope. And if that wasn't enough, we also came up with some new challenges ourselves – for *Timesplitters 2*, which will be out shortly after you read this. So here's the 'skinny'…

- Shoot heads off zombies! We want your highest scores in the Behead the Undead challenge.
- Pane in the neck! Smash all the windows on the Siberia level as quickly as possible.
- Escape from Neo Tokyo! Get to the end as quickly as possible without being detected. Can you beat Geraint 'Master of Stealth' Evans' time? Of course you can!



When sending us evidence of your gaming achievements, it's useful to follow these steps…

PHOTOGRAPHS

If you're sending us evidence of the photographic variety:

1. Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) to prevent it from reflecting off the screen.
2. Draw the curtains to eradicate sunlight.
3. Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
4. If you're using a digicam then use a slower shutter speed.
5. Point at the screen and click away.

PLEASE NOTE: In the past we've had experience of certain scamps 'fiddling' with their photographic evidence, so this time round we're being extra-specially (is that right?) careful. We would, in fact, welcome video evidence over photographic evidence. If, however, you can only send photos, be warned: any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification, and jeering.

VIDEO

If you're going to be sending us the evidence that comes on a tape, follow these instructions carefully:

1. Plug the TV lead from the Gamecube into the Signal In socket of your video.
2. Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
3. Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
4. After completing and recording the challenge, send us the tape (rewound back to the beginning, if you please).

NGC YOUR BEST PERFORMANCE

3 HERE'S MY BEST PERFORMANCE…

MARIO SUNSHINE
Best time on Il Piantissimo's Sand Sprint ....
Best time on Il Piantissimo's Crazy Climb ....

TIMESPLITTERS 2
Highest score in Behead the Undead ....
Best time in Pane in the Neck ....
Best time in Escape from Neo Tokyo ....

LUIGI'S MANSION
Total number of Gs ....
Time taken to beat final boss ....

ROGUE LEADER
Battle of Endor kills ....
Death Star Attack accuracy ....
Star Destroyer fastest time ....

WAVE RACE
Aspen Lake best race time ....
Lost Temple Lagoon stunt score ....
Southern Island lap time ....

SUPER SMASH BROS
Highest score in Home Run ....
Highest juggle combo ....
Quickest time in 100-man melee ....

SONIC 2
Juggernaut Level number of rings ....
Escape from the Military Base best time ....

TONY HAWK'S 3
The Foundry highest score ....
Canada highest trick combo ....
Rio highest score ....

CRAZY TAXI
Ten-Minute Mode most money ....
Crazy Jump longest jump ....
Crazy Drift combo ....

SUPER MONKEY BALL
Fastest time on Frozen Highway ....
Highest score on Monkey Target ....
Fastest time on Advanced Floor 2 ....

Name ....

Address ....

Postcode ....

Send to:
I'M THE BEST, **NGC** Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just write with something other than finger-paints.

LUIGI'S MANSION





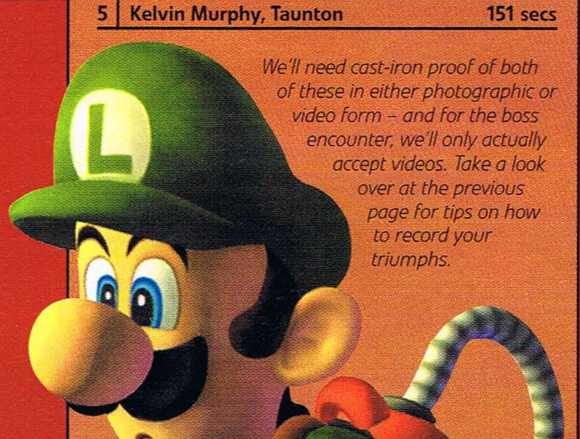
See how many Gs you can notch up at the end of the game.

1	Sean Hinton, Kidderminster	185,710,000G
2	John Dawson, Hull	185,280,000G
3	Daniel Mitchell, East Sussex	184,440,000G
4	Jamie Butters, East Sussex	184,060,000G
5	Mark Richardson, Leeds	183,575,000G



See how long it takes you to dispose of the final boss.

1	Tim Wingate, Tyne & Wear	122 secs
2	Grover Mitchell, Newport	139 secs
3	Alex Gough, Rochdale	142 secs
4	Jonathan Bisaby, Leicester	144 secs
5	Kelvin Murphy, Taunton	151 secs



We'll need cast-iron proof of both of these in either photographic or video form – and for the boss encounter, we'll only actually accept videos. Take a look over at the previous page for tips on how to record your triumphs.

STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER



Most kills on Battle on Endor (you must win at least a Bronze medal).

1	Adam Goodwin, Anglesey	204
2	Joe Newman, London	191
3	David Gamble, Antrim	175
4	Robert McGuire, Co Dublin	169
5	James Miller, Middlesex	161



Highest accuracy on Death Star Attack.

1	Kieran Cornwell, London	93%
2	Chris Fletcher, Stockport	86%
3	Jack Gill, Northallerton	83%
4	Anthony Musson, Preston	82%
5	Thomas Scoffham, Nuneaton	80%

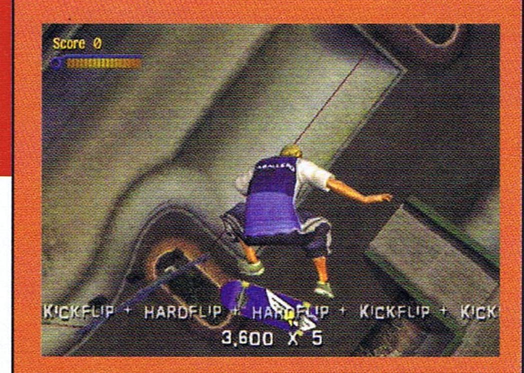
Fastest time achieved taking out the Star Destroyer in Razor Rendezvous.

1	Simon Thomas, Solihull	0:22
2	Paul Bowers, Wolverhampton	0:32
3	Gavin Maidment, Surrey	0:32
4	Stephen Rebel, Netherlands	0:35
5	Alex Jay, Taunton	0:37

On Death Star Attack, we don't want to see you shoot three TIEs with homing torpedoes for 100 per cent accuracy – that's for maggots. We want to see video footage of REAL skill. Pics are fine for the other two.

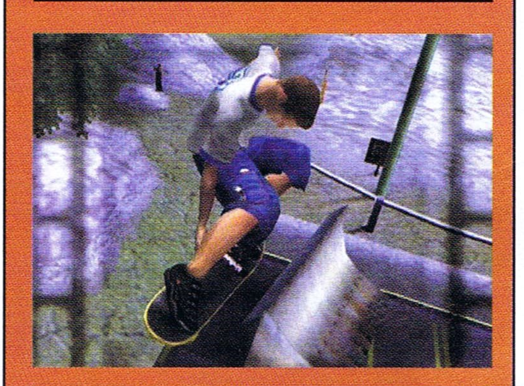
TONY HAWK'S 3





Highest point score on The Foundry level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	8,436,013
2	John Copeland, Co Durham	4,203,016
3	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
4	Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans	3,255,466
5	Chris Hepworth, Pontefract	2,691,264



Highest trick combo on the Canada level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	7,002,912
2	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
3	Gary Lord, Hull	2,173,200
4	John Copeland, Co Durham	1,879,038
5	Kieran Cornwell, London	1,589,816

Highest score on the Rio level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	4,225,882
2	Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans	4,225,882
3	David Bennett, Isle of Man	4,095,129
4	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	3,786,550
5	John Copeland, Co Durham	3,283,355

Remember, Tony Hawk's 3 is blinkin' hard, so you'll need to put in the hours – once you have, get us your proof of the end screen in either photographic or, preferably, videographic form. Ta very much.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO: I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW



WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM



Your best race time on Aspen Lake in Normal mode.

1	Paul Holmes, Edinburgh	0'21"144
2	Daniel Dunn, Boston	1'01"633
3	Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece	1'03"930
4	Robert Watson, Renfrewshire	1'04"176
5	Dave Every, Cheshire	1'04"329



Your best stunt score on Lost Temple Lagoon.

1	Steven Lockwood, Bradford	35,545
2	Ben Tatlow, London	33,160
3	Jon East, Manchester	26,254
4	Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece	11,019
5	John Copeland, Co Durham	10,624

Your best lap time on Southern Island in Normal mode.

1	Daniel Dunn, Boston	0'16"587
2	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	0'18"712
3	Benjamin Hayes, Berkshire	0'18"799
4	Dave Every, Cheshire	0'18"926
5	Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece	0'19"679

Fancy some? Again, we'll need cast-iron proof of your achievements – video is our choice medium, although we may also accept some photographic evidence, provided – of course – that it hasn't been altered or messed with in some way.

CRAZY TAXI





How much money you can nab in the Ten Minute Mode.

1	Alistair Kendall, Bristol	$12,340
2	Billy Keach, Essex	$11,693
3	Steven McKeon,Middlesex	$9,875
4	Phil Sturgeon, Bristol	$9,822
5	Karl Davies, Lanarkshire	$9,520



What your longest jump in Crazy Jump is.

1	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	381.95m
2	Thomas Sherwood, Cheshire	356.25m
3	Alistair Kendall, Bristol	351.63m
4	Jonny Elstree, Nottingham	346.98m
5	Billy Keach, Essex	339.81m



What's your highest Crazy Drift combo?

1	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	109
2	Anthony Henderson, Manchester	58
3	Mark Grafton, Ayrshire	31
4	Billy Keach, Essex	19
5	Steven McKeon & Nicky Day	17

For this one, we'll accept photographic or video evidence, but we won't accept 'fiddled-with' photos and we won't accept bribes, either. You know who you are... Well, on second thoughts, it depends how much you're offering.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2





How many rings you can get at the end of the Juggernaut chase section.

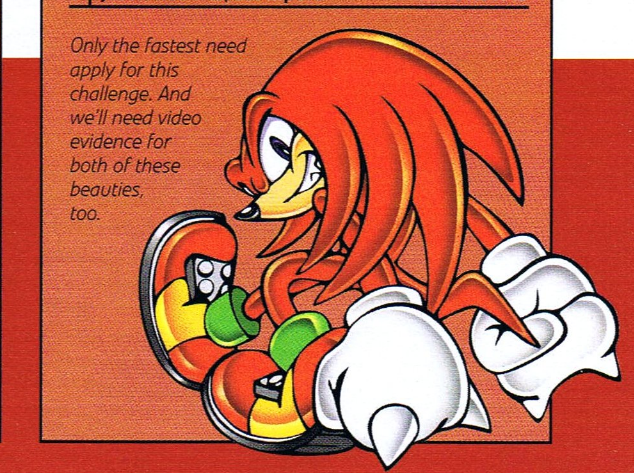
1	William Thomas, Shropshire	440
2	Adam Ely, Weybridge	437
3	Robert McGuire, Co Dublin	334
4	Steven McKeon, Middlesex	307
5	Jason Roberts, Stockport	87



What time you can notch up on Escape from the Military Base.

1	Barry Templeton, Kilmarnock	01:43:57
2	Thomas Sherwood, Cheshire	01:44:00
3	Sam Ely, Weybridge	01:45:90
4	Nicholas Gill, Exeter	01:47:59
5	Jason Roberts, Stockport	01:51:43

Only the fastest need apply for this challenge. And we'll need video evidence for both of these beauties, too.





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STAR LETTER

WIN YOURSELF A BRAND-NEW GAMECUBE GAME!



'It was closed'

I went to the Game On exhibition in London in August, and it was brilliant! They had loads of games there, from an original *Pong* unit to a Gamecube. I managed to get a long go on *Mario Sunshine*, and I also played *Starfox* and *Turok* – they were all amazing.

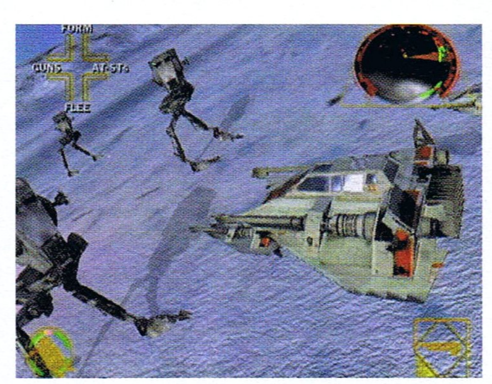
There was a problem or two, though. I know of many people who would have loved to have gone, but I only found out about the exhibition through little news articles in magazines such as yours. And when I got to the Barbican I thought it was closed, with nothing to say that the exhibition was inside – although it was, on the third floor, hidden behind tinted windows. And most of the visitors were retro *Frogger* fans or journalists – there were only about ten kids there! So why aren't things like this advertised better? A non-trade event with new games is rare, but the public just wasn't informed enough. There was an advantage though – I could boast to my friends about playing *Mario Sunshine*.
Ian Steadman, Slough

***For the first exhibition of its kind, Game On could indeed have been advertised more successfully, and we're as guilty as anyone of not promoting the show to its full extent. The next time something so well organised and exhaustive comes along, we'll know better. However, with Sony's PlayStation Experience going down a storm at this year's ECTS – it was an exhibition specifically for the public – hopefully people will realise that a show that allows the public to play new games is a worthwhile endeavour. As we said in last month's news section, imagine being able to walk into ECTS next year and have a go on the next* Mario *or* Zelda*. We can but hope.* Ed**

'Play fantastic'

You generally give fair and honest reviews, but I have one major gripe: you seem to place little to no focus on the longevity of a game. A game may look, sound and be fantastic, but if its over in a day or two, it doesn't deserve the same rating as something that gives months of fun. Take *Rogue Leader*: it has some of the best visuals ever seen in a game, but there are only 14 flying missions, and all of these have linear gameplay that literally turns your ship around if you try to deviate a little from the objectives. Despite this, you gave it an 8 for longevity. Games like *SSBM* and *Monkey Ball* should get the highest ratings, for their genuine replay value on top of beautiful graphics. *Rogue Leader* and *Pikmin* don't deserve Best Buy tags at all.
James Sherrey, via email

***Well, we reckon there's much more to* Rogue Leader *than what's on the surface. Have you got all the medals yet, and opened up the secret levels (not to mention got all the ships)? That'll take you absolutely ages. In this respect,* Rogue Leader *easily deserves the lifespan score that we gave it. There's usually much more to a game than what's initially available to you – and if you want to get your money's worth from game such as* Rogue Leader*, there's plenty there to keep you going.* Ed**



△ ***Rogue Leader*: lasts ages. Unless you're a game spong.**

'Suspicions'

Being a movie fan, I've just finished watching The Game, and a name cropped up that looked familiar… none other than Charles Martinet. My suspicions were confirmed when I had a look on the internet. He's the legend that put a voice to the illustrious Mario and pals in all their games. After watching The Game again especially to see him, however, I was disappointed to find he doesn't even have a single line and appears only in flashbacks – playing a corpse. Perhaps that Oscar nomination isn't on the cards just yet! But he'll always remain in the history books for the immortal phrase "It's-a-me, Mario!"
David Rabbit, via email

***Spooky – we watched it recently too and were amazed to see Mr Martinet as well (having just met him at ECTS he was pretty recognisable). To be fair, he's not actually dead in the flashbacks – the bit where he jumps off the roof of Michael Douglas' house is presumably how he becomes a corpse…* Ed**

Bonus Letters

I think there is an aura around my street – all my neighbours read **NGC** and have Gamecubes!
Steven Clark, via email
***It must be the best street in the world.* Ed**

She uses toad as a living shield.
Charles Frost, via email
***Who wouldn't, though?* Ed**

Can you tell me when *Geary's Gaelic Guinness-Drinking Gathering* will be released?
Pádhraig O'Donoghue, via email
***As soon as Dan learns how to program it.* Ed**

I was searching for fonts on the internet. (Sounds exciting, doesn't it?)
Daniel Benson, via email
***Honestly? No.* Ed**

Who will be the new Director of Sandwiches?
Andrew Campbell, via email
***Who, indeed?* Ed**

URTXTS

SA2B isn't bad it's class • I think Tim is the daddy of NGC do I get a prize hopefully Dan Grady • U R beast



△ **Martinet: doesn't he ever get bored of this?**

'Next best thing'

Right, how about this? How about **NGC** incorporating the Games Radar forums? If you read Edge or PC Gamer, you'll know that in the letters section they print some of the best or funniest posts made in their respective forums. As you don't have your own forum, it's the next best thing. I'm sure it would be quite a popular feature in the mag if you printed some posts or threads and give a paragraph of fame to people.
Gwion Daniel, Carmarthen

***We've been mulling over the possibility of an online forum for some time, as it'd be a great place for readers of the mag to converse and give us their feedback. What does everybody think? Let us know at the usual address and if there's enough demand we'll see what we can do.* Ed**

'And ugly'

So Capcom have decided to release yet more lazy ports of *Resident Evil's* 2 and 3. Why? I mean, do they really need the money that badly? These games are old. And ugly. If they are released at £20 each I won't buy them. When they released *Resi 2* and *Resi 3* on the good 'ol Dreamcast, they received a very poor welcome. Why? Because even by then they were recognised as overpriced old games that looked poor in comparison to anything else on the system.

NGC, please, please, please don't hype these games! We should be demanding a much higher quality from our next-gen system!

And this is coming from a very disappointed *Resi* fan who is a bit concerned about how Capcom are planning to rip off the general public. Rant over.
Mark Brett, via email

***We can understand what you're saying – it does seem a little 'cheap'. But remember that there are still an awful lot of people out there who have never played these games, and the chance to do so on a Nintendo system for a knock-down price is really good news. Also, you've got the all-new* Resident Evil Zero *and the Gamecube-only* Resident Evil 4 *to look forward to, so it's not as if your survival horror hunger is being force-fed lazy old ports and nothing else. What does everyone else think?* Ed**



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Thanks to everyone else who wrote, emailed and texted us this month.

You included: David Bell, via email; Michael Kalinski, via email; Charlotte Burke, via email; Tony Green, via email; James Crisp, via email; Tony Sawdon, via email; Joseph Innes, via email; Martin Mercieca, via email; Anthony Wong, via email; Henry Leach, via email; Gareth Lees, via email; Paul Williams, Huntingdon; Matt Watkins, Cardiff; Daniel McLaren, Cheshire; Matti Odelma, Finland; Mark Buckham, Surrey; Matthew Cassar, Rickmansworth, Mark Davies, Swansea; Richard Errington, Doncaster; Daniel Cohen, London; Chris Murdock, via email; David Turnrow, via email; Gareth Murby, Devon; Phil Donaldson, via email; D.J. Fryer, via email; Michael Rumsby, via email; Richard Robson,

Vampires, the return of FuSoYa, and turning up 'page brightness'




'Ripped off'

What's happened to the price of games? When the Gamecube was in development we were told games would cost £20 to £30, as discs would be cheaper to manufacture and companies would spend less on making games. Cartridges were expensive to make, and that's why games were £40 or £50, but still the same prices are being charged. How can PS2 games come out then a couple of weeks later sell for £30? My friends and I are very frustrated with the Gamecube prices.
Kev and 'the gang', Fife

We'd guess that the problem is that Nintendo, like Sony and Microsoft, make money on the software they sell, not the hardware. Nintendo actually lose money on the Gamecube itself, as it is so cheap, and so make profit through the games – hence the more-than-expected asking price (remember that when the N64 launched, Turok cost £70!) Sony and other PS2 publishers can afford to drop their prices, as the console is so widespread that they can be assured of high sales. Once the Cube gains more momentum and popularity – hopefully* Mario Sunshine *will have boosted sales – cheaper games might be forthcoming. Fingers crossed, eh? Ed

'Secret alliance'

Once upon a time I had a Dreamcast. I had to get some replacement batteries for the VMU – nothing strange there. However, what was strange was the small print on the reverse of the package. Is this some kind of secret alliance between Nintendo and Sega? A typo? Or evidence of some real close co-operation before the birth of the Gamecube and the death of the Dreamcast? It does lead to some interesting speculation, no?
Pod, Scotland

You're not wrong there, 'Pod'. Or it could just be that the people who made the batteries had no idea what they were going on about. Ed

'Next best thing'

As I am writing this my brother has unearthed the N64 from the cupboard and is playing *Mario Kart*. When he turned it on, the old sound of Mario's voice made me remember crying when I finished *Zelda*, slipping silently through Facility in *GoldenEye*, killing aliens in *Perfect Dark*, and it made me think. Everyone may harp on about Gamecube being Nintendo's best yet, but will it recreate the above, and provide the original, heartwarming feeling of anticipation when you bring a brand-new cartridge home? GC may be more technically powerful than the N64, but will it provide deeper gameplay?
Gabriel Harry, Hereford

We know what you mean. Only yesterday I irritated the hell out of everyone by doing the Mario Circuit shortcut. Ah, yes. But anyway, give it time and we're sure you'll come to regard Gamecube in the same fond way as the N64. Ed

'Black squares'

I have only one niggle with your mag, and that's pictures that are too dark. I've just spent an entire day (off and on) reading issue 72, in particular the *Resident Evil* review on page 56. Now I'm sure the game looks great, as you say, except I can't tell because the pictures are all black squares. To top it off, you put them on shiny paper (I know it's good quality, but you put it in the light and all you get is a reflection). Sorry to sound like an old man, but I enjoy the articles and would like to enjoy the pictures too. Just add a bit of contrast.
Claremont, via email

Ah, yes. The* Resident Evil *review. We're really sorry about that, but it was a printing problem (and nothing so simple as turning the contrast up on our grabber). Every so often, Jud puts a fresh clip into his H&K MP5 and 'visits' the printers to see how things are 'going' – getting everything just-so is an ongoing process, with constant amendments and improvements to the printing process (it's much more complicated than you might think). Ed

'Brightness'

Is there a way to turn the brightness up on some of your pics? I was reading the *Resident Evil* review and I could barely make any detail out in them – even with the lights on.
Phil Barrett via email

Yes, yes, very good – ha ha. You can stop now. Ed

'The same kick'

I would like to share some thoughts with you. Firstly, Nintendo don't make games for kids. They make games for the young at heart – where other consoles tend to be more 'realistic' (*Gran Turismo* and so on), Nintendo offer worlds with innocence, that are only a power switch away when the stress of life gets you down. Secondly, about Nintendo making shorter games – I have no problem with this. It's like watering down Vodka – you might have a bigger drink but you still get the same kick! However, I think it's only fair that the reduced cost of development time be passed on down to the consumer. I'm sure people would rather buy two games at £25 each, rather than one at £40. Finally, Gamecube isn't as powerful as Xbox – so what! It's the quality of the software that's important. What would you rather listen to? S-Club Juniors on five-speaker, Pro Logic DTS super sub-woofer, or a piece of Mozart on a scratchy vinyl LP? Actually, forget I asked.
Simon Turk, Tunbridge Wells

Hear, hear. Although you're skirting thin ice with the S-Club example. If Greener were still here he'd make a mockery of your logic. Ed

'Strange one'

I've just noticed that the left platform on the Kongo Jungle stage in *Super Smash Bros Melee* looks like the compartments the guests walk out of on Celebrity

Bonus Letters

I need to fire an automatic shotgun into the head of some unsuspecting guard, with satisfying results.
Tom Murphy, via email
Not in real life, though, right? Right? Ed

Is it true that Tim is nothing more than a shaved monkey in a suit?
'S1496', via email
Yes. Yes it is. Ed

Greeks the pinnacle of deep thought? My monkey!
Steven Perry, Leeds
This makes no empirical sense. Ed

If the world was an arse, you would be the bumfluff.
The Evil Little Elf, via email
Charming. Now get back to your Lapland sweatshop. Ed

CORRECTION CORNER

Lies, damned lies, and lots and lots of mistakes...

On page 42 of issue 70 you said that the reason why the Nintendo Wavebird didn't rumble was because it would drain the batteries too quick. This is WRONG – the reason why the Wavebird doesn't rumble is actually because it can only send signals and not receive them. Do you see?
No name supplied

True enough, perhaps. But the battery issue is Nintendo's official line, so hahaha! At last we're right! At last! Cough. Ed

In **NGC**/72 page 12, third line down you wrote "Harold Potter" instead of "Harry Potter".
M Tilley, via email

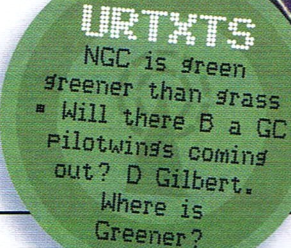
But, you see, Harry is short for Harold, so we're correct again! Can no-one stop us? Ed

In **NGC**/72, on pages 68 to 71, you misspelled Capcom three times! THREE!
Kyle Nichol, via email

Nuts. Ed







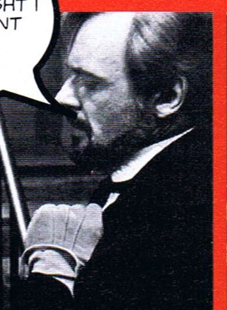
via email; Darren Brown, Manchester; Kevin Fuller, Oxford; Tim Campion-Smith, via email; Billy Bagpipes, Scotland; Henry Winkler, USA; Terry Smith, via email; Alan Ball, via email; TOM DILLOW from GRIFFYDAM; Pierre Hyde, Welwyn Garden City; "Dark" Mark Reece, Cardiff; Elliot Ridgeon, via email; Norman Hubbard, York

Grintendo!

EVERY MONTH, WE'LL TEST YOUR JOKES ON A FAMOUS CELEBRITY. IF THEY GIVE IT THE THUMBS UP, YOU WIN A GAME OF YOUR CHOICE. DEAL?
THIS MONTH: ROBERT COOPER, SHEFFIELD

NGC SPECIAL GUEST JOHN HURT from David Lynch's The Elephant Man

WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK



Merrick images: © Kobal

URTXTS
I fink that Mario is cool, Yoshi is cool, Toad is cool, and Peach is well, just Peachy. From Chris J

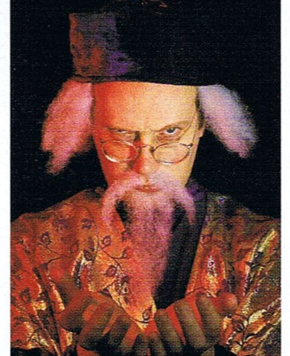
Ready Steady Cook. Has anyone else noticed that? Anyone?
Rupert Allison, via email

Anyone? **Ed**

'Strange one'

After many fruitless leads and quests, I have finally discovered why the hell Wil Overton used to dress up and go around as FuSoYa! It's the name of a bloke in *Final Fantasy II*. He always was a bit of a strange one, wasn't he?
Vincent Kenny, via email

Stranger than you can possibly imagine. **Ed**


△ Overton: now making games for much heavier consoles.

'Numerous theories'

On the day I bought *Mario Tennis*, I was reading the back of the box, and to my horror it said "Die Nintendo All Stars". Now many observant and intelligent people out there will realise I was of course reading the German translation. While this (to the German Nintendo gamer) would seem perfectly normal, many in the English-speaking world were greatly upset by this – ie, me. Numerous theories came into my head; for example, that Hitler was alive and well, working in a Nintendo box factory in Europe, thinking no one would notice if he advocated the deaths of Mario, Luigi and Shy Guy, to name but a few. But when I thought some more this seemed, admittedly, unlikely.
Andy Mud, via email

Unlikely indeed. **Ed**

'Release adverts'

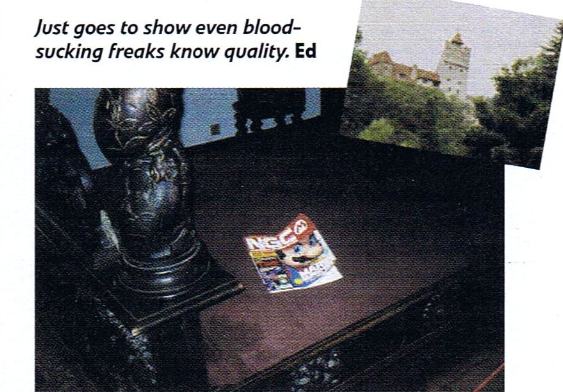
While I generally feel Nintendo are the best developers around, and give me the best games, I have to wonder why others don't feel the same way. Of course, people do, but the masses of so-called 'casual gamers' refuse to be swayed by Nintendo's charms. It's the oldest debate in recent Nintendo history. While Nintendo are moving focus from Japan to the West, which I am very happy about, losing Rare and a failing ad campaign (their games still aren't perceived as 'cool') can't help their reputation. While Nintendo have plenty of 'cool' games arriving (*Die Hard* and the like), they are not known about. Nintendo need to get into the shops and attack the market, not just release adverts.
Nick Hall, Devon

We think Ninty are doing okay with the adverts, to be honest – that* Smash Bros *one was on all the time, and the very fact that Nintendo are advertising on the telly is a miracle in itself. How many telly ads do you remember seeing for the N64? We caught the* Perfect Dark *ad twice, and the* Jet Force Gemini *one on a single solitary occasion at about three in the morning. Still, once the really high-profile games make their mark, we're confident that more of the 'casual gamers' you speak of will understand the beauty of Nintendo. **Ed**

'Reading Material'

Since playing *Resi* on the Cube, late at night, in the dark, alone, I have realised there are not enough hours in the day... er, or perhaps night... so I came up with an idea. Become immortal! So I headed off to Castle Bran in deepest darkest Transylvania in search of Vlad the Impaler, Dracula, the man himself. When I entered my camera was taken away from me, but as luck would have it my travelling companion stuffed his into his pocket. I found Drac's bedroom but it was sealed off – I snuck in anyway but he was not there, although he had left his nocturnal reading material out...
Elliot Jefferson, Hemel Hempstead

Just goes to show even blood-sucking freaks know quality. **Ed**


△ Uncle Vlad likes using the pages to line his coffin. True.

SO TELL ME THIS...

We have the answers. The answers to your questions. Uh-huh. Yeah.

On a widescreen TV my games have a kind of 'border' on the left and right sides. Do you have this problem? If not what TV do you have and what specs should I look for if I upgrade? Will RGB Scart help? The option to change screen size will not work on games, only on the TV transmission.
Riff, London

You have two options: Put the TV into 4:3 mode (using one of the buttons on the remote), in which case the picture will be displayed at the correct aspect ratio but you'll have big black borders at either side of the screen; or play in widescreen mode, which will stretch the picture, making everything look slightly squashed with a loss of resolution. Unless there's an in-game widescreen option, you'll always have to put up with borders or a stretched picture. Helpfully, all our reviews now state whether the game features a widescreen option.

1. Will Namco's *Starfox* be along the lines of *Lylat Wars*, do you think? Will it have a multiplayer GC counterpart, like *F-Zero X*?
2. Wouldn't the GC look good with deep-blue fur, or maybe a bright hippy design?
Richard Townrow, via email

1. We honestly don't know yet. Given that it's being developed for both the arcade and Gamecube, though, we'd expect an emphasis on immediate thrills and mucho dogfighting (a well-considered multiplayer option is a given, we reckon). It'll be interesting to see if* Lylat Wars' *intricate level design and game progression will remain, too.
2. If you're a bright hippy, or covered in blue fur, then possibly.

1. Is it true that Nintendo is going to go software-only?
2. Will a Gamecube *Golden Sun* ever be released?
2. What do you think about Datel's Action Replay DC?
Henrique Alves, via email

1. It's just a rumour, born of unfounded internet gossip, but it's not outside the realms of possibility either. If it does happen, though, it won't be for years and years. And years.
2. There's no news of a GC* Golden Sun *yet. But wouldn't it be great if it happened?
3. If you want to cheat, then it's great. But we prefer playing games the old-fashioned way.

1. Is *Burnout 2: Point of Impact* coming to Gamecube? It's on the PS2 – I've seen the release date for the American PS2 version?
Richard Lecutier, Nottingham

1. It most certainly is. The game, however, is currently some way behind the PlayStation 2 version, development-wise, and so it won't be released in the UK until after Christmas.

1. How can I get the best possible picture from my Gamecube? The leads you get in the box make games look rubbish.
Eileen Durst, Basildon

1. If your telly has an RGB Scart connection, you should get yourself one of Nintendo's own official RGB Scart cables. Otherwise, get a better telly.

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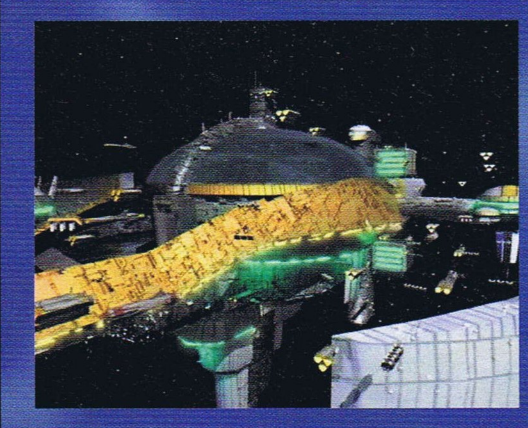

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BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO...

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODE 1 & 2

Don't know you RAcast from your FOnewearl? Never battled a Dimenian in the Darkened Ruins? You'll soon want to…





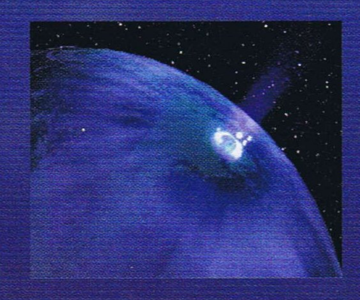


WHAT IS PHANTASY STAR ONLINE?

Dreamcast owners have – with good reason – been crowing about it for years. It is, after all, one of Sega's crowning achievements. A fully functional virtual world where subscribers from the far reaches of the globe can team up, battle, trade and communicate, *PSO* on DC enchanted thousands upon thousands of gamers with its unique sense of community and – cheating scumbags aside – it worked like a dream.

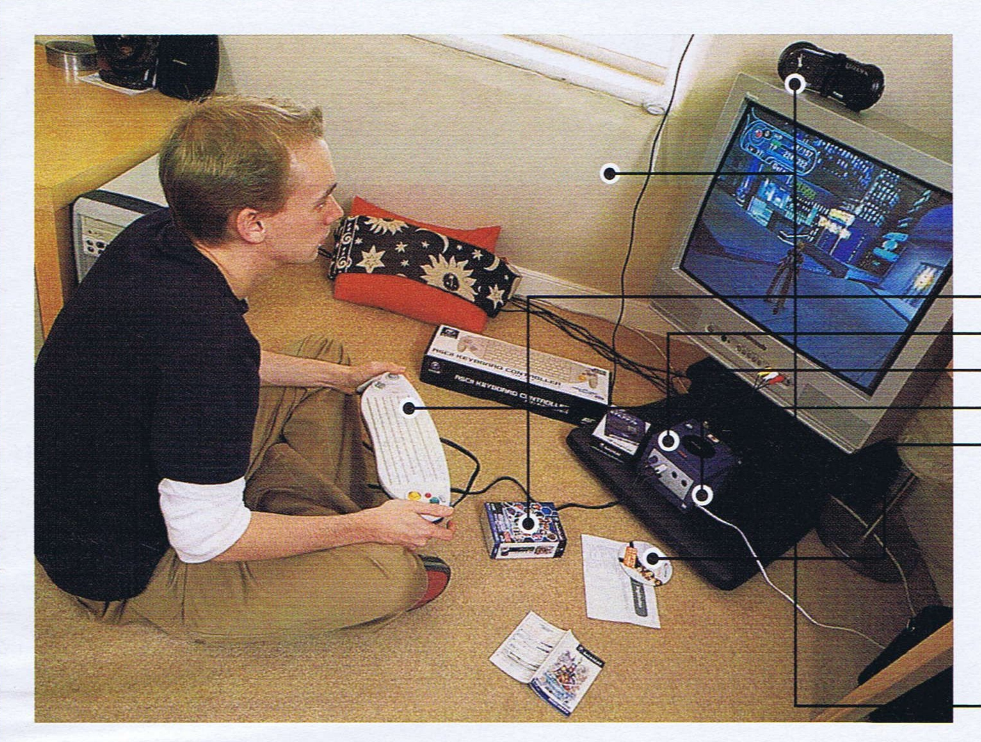
The premise itself is quite simple. After creating your online persona, you get beamed onto Pioneer 2 – a gigantic spaceship transporting fleeing colonists to their potential new home called Ragol – but all is not well. Years previously, Pioneer 1 began a colony on the surface of the planet only for it to be mysteriously wiped out. On its arrival, Pioneer 2 is left with a planet populated by vicious monsters. Only by sending down teams of Hunters to tame the indigenous wildlife can the colony begin to uncover the dark secrets of Ragol and begin setting up their new home.

You take on the role of one of 12 different character types (which are sub-divided into three classes). You can either brave the surface of Ragol alone or, by going online, you can increase your chances of success by teaming up with up to three total strangers and assisting each other in intense battles. Over the next few pages we'll ease you into Sega's magical world, help you get set up online, and give you a brief tour of Pioneer 2 and the planet below.







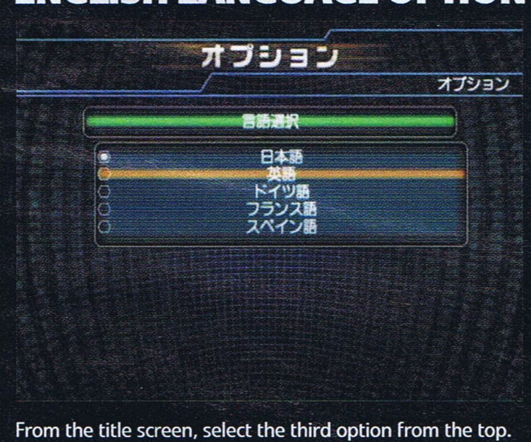


WHAT YOU'LL NEED (AND NEED TO KNOW)

Before you begin, make sure you have the following items and details to hand…

- A copy of *Phantasy Star Online.*
- A Japanese (or modded) Gamecube.
- A Gamecube modem.
- An ASCII keyboard.
- An Internet Service Provider (ISP), such as Freeserve Anytime or Virgin.net, which enables you to connect to the internet.
- Your ISP account details (your user ID, password and dial-up number).
- A valid Japanese postcode and phone number (you can find these on the internet easily enough). You can get each one from different places, but the important thing is the format in which they are written. For example, Japanese postcodes are written like this: ***-****; while the format for phone numbers is **-****-****. They can be altered slightly if you like, but the format *must* be kept the same.
- A valid email address.
- A spare couple of hours and a brick wall to bang your head against.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE OPTION



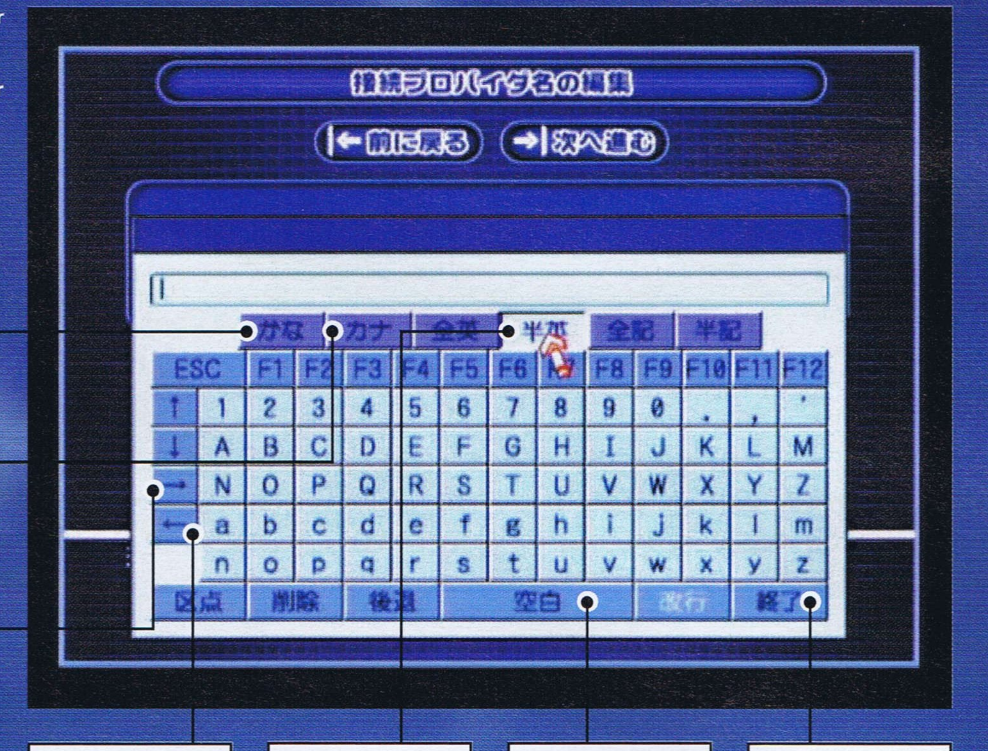
From the title screen, select the third option from the top. Now select the top option. Now select the second option down. The language should now be set to English. Also, to make things a little easier for yourself, go back to the title screen, create your character and save it to your memory card. Now go back to the title screen, choose Options and get ready to register.

OPTIONS
Options
Language
Sound
BGM TEST
Sound Balance
Snapshot
Network Option
Serial Number/Access Key/Password
End

SOFTWARE KEYBOARD

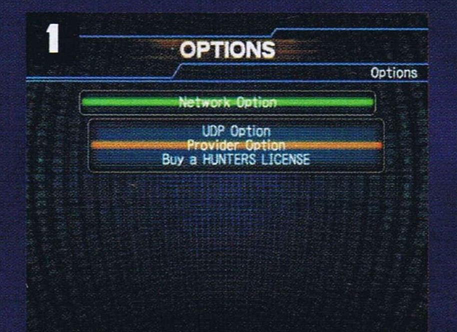
If you don't have a keyboard for your Gamecube, you'll need to use this. During registration you'll have to click on boxes to enter your specific personal details. When you click on these boxes (plain white rectangles) a software keyboard will pop up. By moving the cursor to the letters you can enter your details. The key below highlights everything you need to know…

- **The A-button on your joypad enters letters and symbols.**
- **The B-button on your joypad deletes letters and symbols.**
- **The L and R triggers shuffle between the various symbols and letter types.**

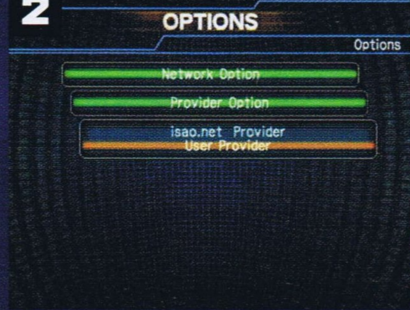


GETTING CONNECTED

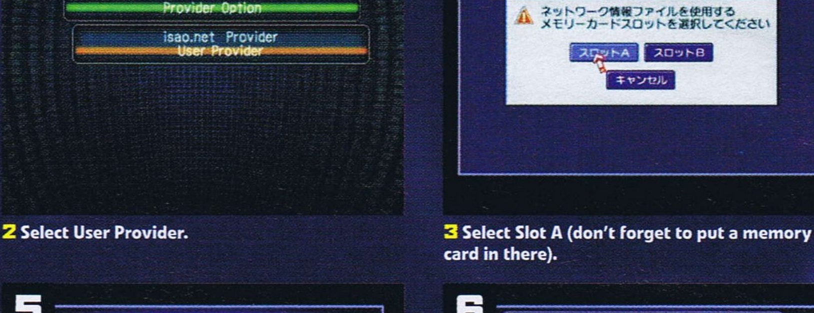
Setting up your ISP couldn't be easier with this step-by-step guide…



1 From the options screen, select Network Option, then Provider Option.



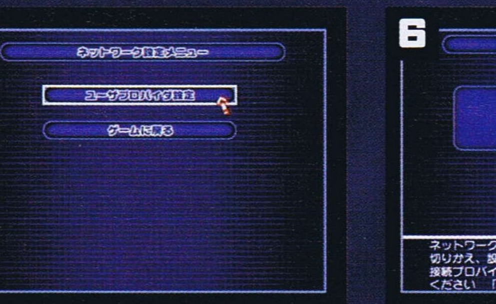
2 Select User Provider.



3 Select Slot A (don't forget to put a memory card in there).



4 Select Yes (left button).



5 Select ISP Setup (middle bar).



6 Name your ISP – call it whatever you want. Then press the right-hand button to confirm.



7 Select Next (the right-hand button).



8 Ignore this screen – it's for your modem setting. Skip it by pressing Next (right button).



9 To fill in these individual boxes, click your cursor on the white area. The software keyboard (which is explained on page 103) will allow you to type your details.

The top white bar is for your ISP Identification. If you don't have these details to hand, check your existing internet account.

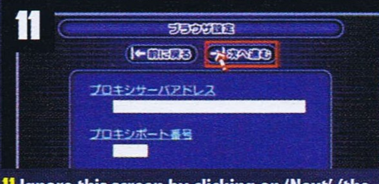
The second bar is for your ISP password.

The next three bars are for your ISP dial-up number (the number you use to connect to the internet). You should only need one, but if you have two back-up numbers enter those too if you like.

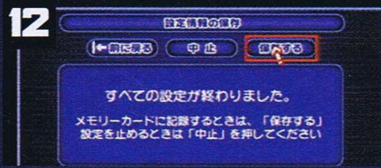
Once you've completed this section, select Next (the right-hand button).



10 If you have your DNS details, feel free to enter them (DNS numbers look like this: 234.654.1.678) However, this field is *not* necessary. You can ignore it by selecting the right-hand button.



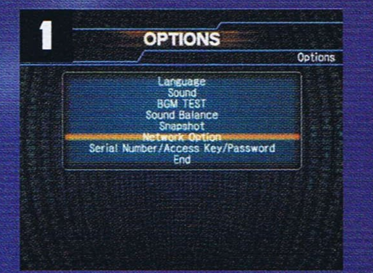
11 Ignore this screen by clicking on 'Next' (the right hand button).



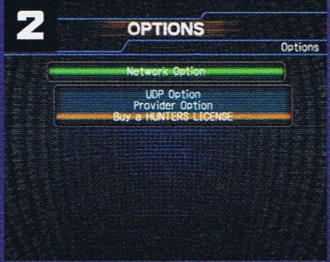
12 This is the last screen. Save your details by pressing Save (the right hand button).

OBTAINING A HUNTER'S LICENCE

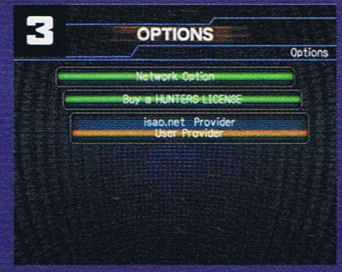
The Hunter's Licence is absolutely necessary for playing online. Without it you can't access the lobby area where the teaming-up process begins.



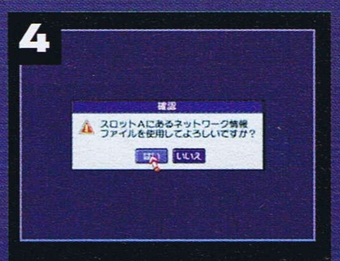
1 From the title screen, select Options, then Network Option.



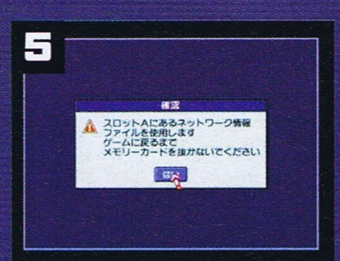
2 Now select Buy a HUNTER'S LICENSE.



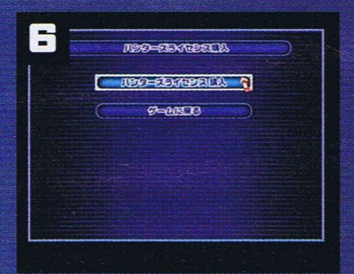
3 Lastly, select User Provider.



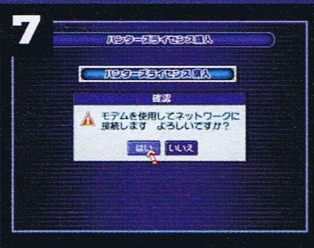
4 Select Slot A (you must have a memory card in there).



5 Click on the OK button (it's the only one you can click).

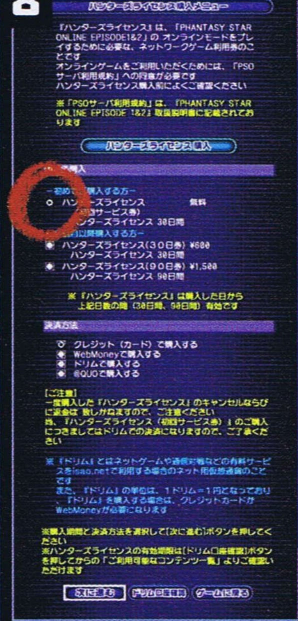


6 Click on the middle bar.



7 Select Yes (the left button).



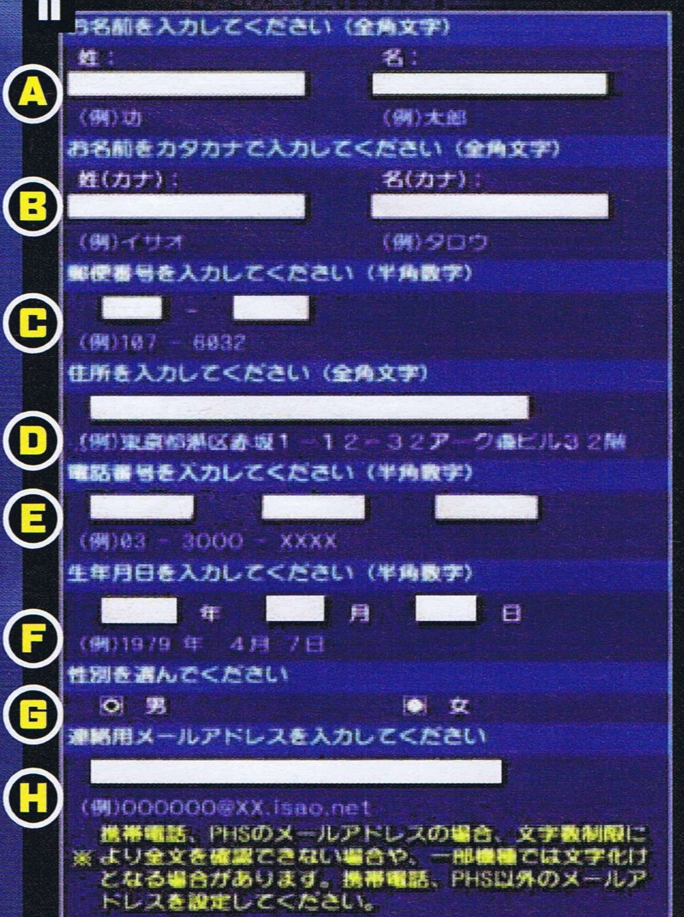


8 Click where we've highlighted (it should already be there as default for your month's free trial), scroll to the bottom, and click the far left button.



9 The two bars highlighted here are for your serial number and access key. These can be found at the back of your instruction booklet. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and then press the left-hand button.

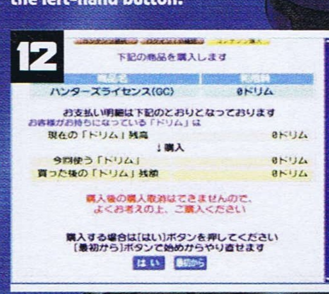
10 Click the only button on the screen.



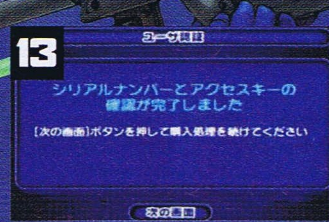
11 This part is easy enough – but check the Software Keyboard diagram on page 103 if you get stuck. You simply need to enter the following…

- **A)** Write anything in Kanji.
- **B)** Write anything in Kana.
- **C)** Enter the valid Japanese postcode copied from the internet.
- **D)** Enter an address you copied from the internet.
- **E)** Enter a valid phone number.
- **F)** Enter your Date of Birth (you must be over 21).
- **G)** Gender. Left button is male, right is female.
- **H)** Your email address.

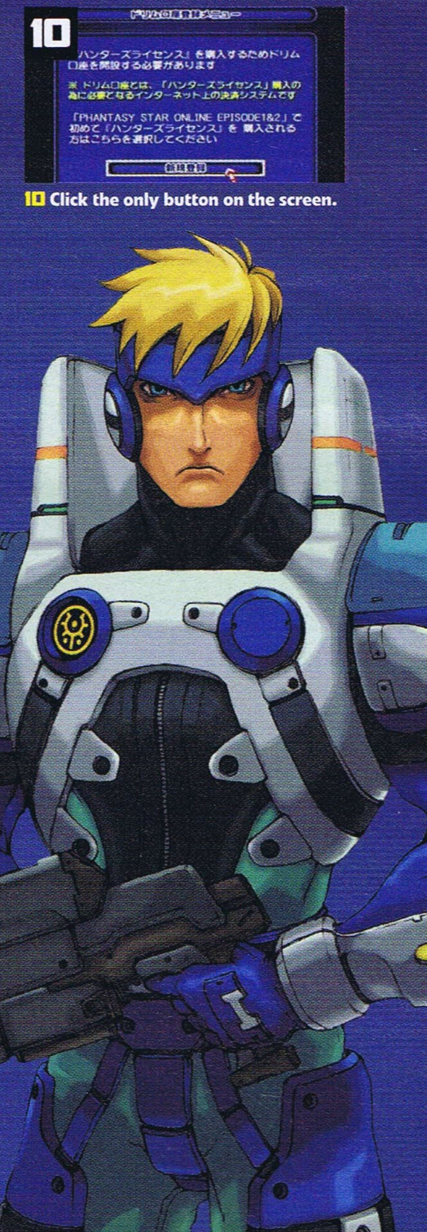
Then click the-bottom button to continue.



12 Click the button on the left.



13 Click the only button you can.



WELCOME TO RAGOL

From Pioneer 2 you access the weird, wonderful world of Ragol. This is the potential new home of the colonists, but the lush scenery hides a dark secret...



The majority of areas are divided into three separate parts that you warp to, capped off by a huge boss at the end.



FOREST

Sunny glades, babbling brooks and flowery clearings give way to giant apes who want to smash your head into tiny fragments of skull. Deep into the forest you'll come across Pioneer 1's deserted settlement, where things take a turn for the worse. A 100-foot fire-breathing turn, to be precise.

CAVES

Huge caverns with bubbling lava seeping through cracks, that lead into gorgeous openings with rippling pools of water, framed by stunning trees and delicate rainbows. The waterfalls here are particularly impressive – not that you're going to have much time to do any sightseeing, mind you...





A beautiful portion of the caves, this. Here, Geraint poses for a snapshot while his mates take a beating. Charming.



Lightning is useful here, as the enemies are all technology based. Most weapons and magic have enemy-specific uses.



MINES

The mines are a gleaming maze of corridors and sparkling open spaces, filled with hard-punching robots and flying drones. It's here that things get tricky – with multiple, fast-moving enemies to fight as well as giant, artillery-launching mechs and a gigantic computer to smash the hell out of.

LOBBY

The lobbies are like hotel reception areas where you can mingle, and find same-level characters to team up with. There are literally hundreds of lobbies to choose from, some of which are specialised, huge open spaces in which you can indulge in a spot of footie (not a joke). Its main function, however, is to meet up with other players before you begin an adventure or a multi-player duel. Once you've formed a team, you create a game at the reception desk. You can if, you want to keep things private, set a password to lock your game out to strangers, or you can leave it open for all-comers. Once your team-mates are sorted, it's time to beam down to Pioneer 2 to do a spot of shopping. Lovely.



NOW, NOW – PLAY NICE!

- Remember, you're supposed to work as a team. If there's a fight going on, help out as best as you can. After all, you'll want a share of the EXP, right?

- Don't go around the arena just picking up all the best items while your mates get their faces smacked in. Always clear the area of enemies *before* you start looking for goodies.

- If there are items you don't think are important to you, don't just pick them to sell on – they may be genuinely useful to someone else.

- When you're in the position of having a substantially higher level than a weaker team mate, help them to gain EXP by weakening enemies or drawing them away from your friend. *Don't* steam in and annihilate everything in the room with lightning, or they'll never level up.

- If you have an item that would be highly beneficial to a low-level team-mate and it's no skin off your nose if



PIONEER 2

The Pioneer 2 mothership is different in each episode, but this central hub's facilities remain the same. Here, you can trade items with your friends, heal yourself at the Medical Centre or go shopping. The Arms, Tools and Guard shops supply you with weapons, and items such as spells, antidotes, and body armour. Any surplus items or cash that you don't want to lug around in your inventory can be deposited at the bank.

You can also download mini-quests from the Hunter's Guild to earn cash and experience points, or you can visit the Tekker – a specialist booth where dodgy-looking 'experts' will identify any rare items you've discovered on your travels.

RUINS

A dark and foreboding place, the sheer volume of enemies to deal with – many of which are faster than you are – make this *brutally* hard in places. Just remember to return to Pioneer to stock up often. On the plus side, many of the best items can be found here and the end-of-level boss is one of the most impressive in any game we've ever played.





Tackling the Ruins with four players is advisable, as the end-of-level boss is very tough. Cooperation is the key here.

SEASHORE

In a word, stunning – easily the best-looking level. Footprints are left in the sand, fish swim in the shallow ocean, and shady caves await further inland letting in streaks of sunlight. Even the misty central control room (from where this location accessed) is very impressive, offering majestic views punctuated with lightning.



Look at it. LOOK AT IT! Sega's lack of sprucing on the DC's old levels is more than made up for with these locations.



JUNGLE

The jungle is sublime and reminiscent of Yoda's swampy homeland of Dagobah. The jumping ice-breathing gibbons combined with claustrophobic arenas and narrow tree-trunk pathways can make this tough to negotiate. Taking a high-level force into this area is advisable – there are plenty of enemies.





For Force characters, it's best to carry short- and long-range weapons, to keep your distance while still being useful.

Since the DC version of *PSO* came out, online etiquette has developed. It's worth bearing the following in mind…

you lose it, give it to them. It's only clogging up your inventory anyway.

- Don't be an idiot and just go around insulting everyone. Some lobbies in the DC version became unbearable because of this. There's no point – it's impolite and the fact that they can't come round your house to beat your worthless hide is no excuse for acting like a child.

- If a new player joins your game and you're already three quarters of the way through the level, don't make them walk all the way to your position – be nice, and open up a Telepipe (a teleporter) so they can join in straight away.

- It's customary to congratulate your teammates when they level up. 'CongratsM8' is often used, and there's also an equivalent emoticon in Symbol Chat.

- If someone gives you their guild card, it's *extremely* rude not to return the gesture. It means you can find them, but they can't find you.



CHARACTER BUILDING

CHARACTER CLASSES

Character selection defines your powers and abilities, and determines how you'll play for the rest of your game. Once you've chosen a character you can change your appearance as you please.

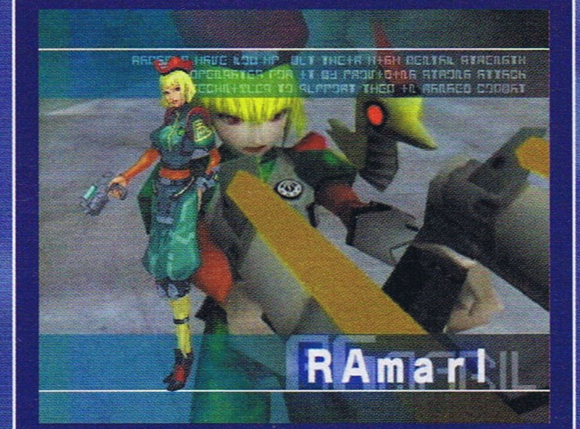
HUNTER



Consist of four characters: HUmar, HUnewearl, HUcast and HUcaseal – the latter two are androids. Hunters can use powerful, multi-hitting melee attacks but, for the most part, only have access to minimal magic techniques, if any at all. Their main speciality is fighting at point-blank range with bladed weapons, and their exceptional strength means they can take damage well. In every case, Hunters are the first and most efficient line of attack.

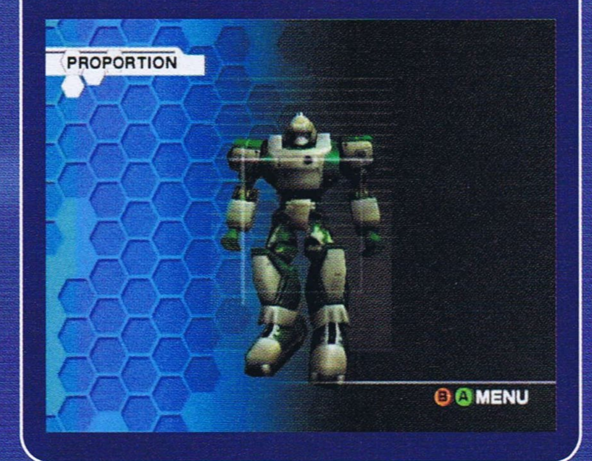


RANGER

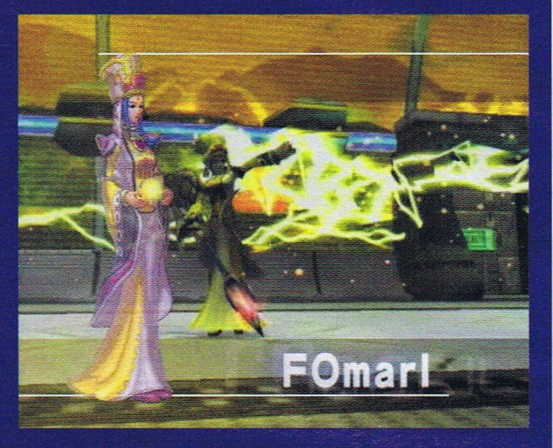


Made up of the characters RAmar, RAmarl, RAcast and RAcaseal. Rangers are deadly accurate, specialising in long-range weapons such as rifles, handguns and rapid-fire autoguns. They can also use magic, but have poor defensive attributes.

Rangers are very handy at a distance, backing up Hunters by firing rounds into a skirmish, stalling enemies giving Hunters the chance to squeeze in more attacks, and dealing with airborne enemies.



FORCE



FOmar, FOmarl, FOnewm and FOnewearl are the characters making up the Force class. They are *very* weak, but once levelled up they have access to insanely powerful magic that can wipe out a whole arena of enemies or resurrect a team of fallen comrades in one go.

Forces' main role is back-up. They can heal entire parties and can weaken enemies' defence and attack as well as powering up their own team's attributes.



YOUR MAG

These fellas (the orangey-green things over Geraint's shoulders) are a little like pokémon. If you feed them and treat them well they will level up and evolve. The higher the level, the more useful they are in battle, boosting your stats and allowing you to use better weapons. Mags will also boost your defences, revive you when you've been killed, make you invulnerable for a short time and, as they evolve, give you ultra-powerful attacks that fill the screen with huge explosions.









△ Hunters are ideal for beginners, allowing you to concentrate on one thing – slaughter.

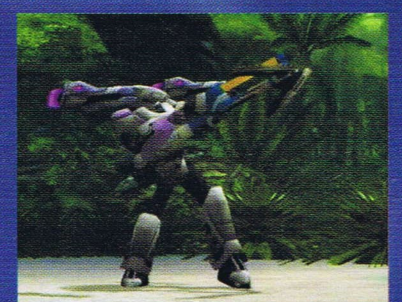


ONLINE OPINION

Ever wondered what an online *Gauntlet* would be like? Read on…

There's always one, isn't there? That one game that, when stripped down to its bare bones, is so exceptionally hard to define. *PSO* is such a game. It's very easy to be scathing about its repetitive nature. Fair enough – at its core, it's a hack-and-slash adventure. Surplus to this, it's a case of intense item management. A case of wandering the same environments, dispatching identikit enemies. But the thing is, despite the fact that that's what *PSO* partly is, it's also much more than that. Something so utterly intangible, that despite the fact that you *know* the gameplay dynamics are, well… dull, you can t help but love every minute of it.

As you already know, *Phantasy Star Online* can be played both online and offline and unless you have a flat-rate ISP account (or a wallet stuffed full of notes) playing off-line is a necessity. It gives you time to hone your tactics and, more importantly, the opportunity to accumulate mesetas and EXP points. Still, while it's all relatively entertaining, the experience as a whole is a bit lacking. The repetition of wandering around the game's mazes, delivering near-identical attacking moves over and over again to legion upon legion of carbon-copy enemies is, ultimately, pretty mind-numbing – there's no two ways about it. But of course, *Phantasy Star Online*, isn't called *Phantasy Star Online* for nothing. It demands to be played with a virtual community, as Yuji Naka and the rest of Sonic team intended, and once you begin to do so the game is transformed into something that's



△ Like lumbering androids with ridiculously big guns? Then it's a Ranger's life for you!

not only compulsive and horribly addictive, but that blossoms into something very magical indeed.

Take your first few hours on *PSO* as an example. If you've teamed up with someone of a higher level you'll be well looked after – and *this* is the most important aspect of *PSO*. It's the sense of community. Kindly souls will help you with the basics, give you a few extra spells, mesetas and items to give you an early boost. You'll get a great sense of camaraderie as you successfully tackle bosses. You'll lose hours in the lobby chatting about your rare finds and bizarre experiences. You'll feel elation at levelling up and gaining access to a new weapon and then, at around 3.30am on a Sunday, you'll feel genuine dismay at the fact that you have to part company with your team and get at least *some* sleep. If ever there was a game to which you could apply the phrase 'more than the sum of it's parts', then *PSO* is it.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Whassat, then?



AFK Away from keyboard. The player is taking a dump, or making a toasted cheese sandwich, with bread.

RSOD Reset of Death. A term used in the DC version to describe the act of some slimy toerag resetting your console through hacking/cheating… expect similar heartache when the Action Replay hits stores.

PK Player Killing. Idiots who hack the game and then kill you online.

NP No Problem. The usual response received after thanking someone for reviving or healing you when you've just taken a beating.

LOL Laughs out loud. An indication that the player is amused to the point of actual physical laughter.

ROFL Rolls on floor laughing. A more extreme version of the above state.

BRB Be Right Back. Normally used when someone is exiting a level via a Telepipe to stock up on some potions or just empty their inventory.

PIPE ME Open a Telepipe. A request to open a portal back to Pioneer so that a team member can join you quickly.

TP Technique Points. Your magic power.

FLUID Monofluid, Difluid, Trifluid. Potion which re-stocks your magic power.

ANTI A potion which cures an abnormal status, such as poison or paralysis.

MAG Floating shoulder-creature that boosts your stats and charges up to deliver a special attack.

SYMBOL CHAT A small archive of customisable emoticons, used to convey different emotions that can be understood by all nationalities.

BUILD CARD Your ID. If you give this to someone, they can look for you online and send you private mail.

TALK TIME

Want to know what it's like to work in the games industry? We give you an inside look via a mobile phone and a spot of verbal stalking…



WHO IS… CIARAN ROONEY



Ciaran Rooney is the Audio Programmer at BAM studios. He's currently working on the Gamecube version of *Reign of Fire*. His past credits include the excellent *Body Harvest* on N64, *Grand Theft Auto*, and Bits Studio's *Die Hard: Vendetta* (reviewed this issue on page 54).

9.10AM

Morning Ciaran! NGC here! Do you copy?
Hi – I'm just about to leave for work. Driving a scooter through gridlocked London traffic with a phone to your ear isn't such a good idea – or so the police tell me. Give me an hour or so.
Right you are! Over and out!

10.15AM

Hi Ciaran. You at work yet?
Yeah, I just got in. I'm reading through the bug report for Reign of Fire sent in by our US playtester team. Looks like I'm going to have a fair amount of work to do today…
What do you do all day? It's not just checking through bug reports is it? Well? IS IT?
No, not at all. My day-to-day routine is always different, but on the whole I work closely with the design team to specify what content has to be created for the game and what kind of music would be suitable. I also have to find composers, and think about what sound effects are likely to be needed after going through the game design thoroughly. Then I have to find a sound designer to create the sounds. I also keep tabs on how the music and sound effects are progressing. Then I have to design and code an engine to play back the in-game audio and test everything to make sure it sounds right before release.
Phew. Sounds like a lot of work! We'll let you get on with it…
Yeah. Cheers.

12.10AM

Ciaran! Things! How are they?
I've finally got the latest build of the game from everyone's changes last night and I've fixed those bugs. The game's really coming on. Looks to me like this is Bam's best game so far.
You must get a lot of pleasure seeing the game take shape, and the effect your work has on the atmosphere…
Yeah, definitely. Hearing and seeing the finished game always gives me a buzz. It always amazes me to think that everything you see and hear in a computer game is the work of the imagination. Often it's not until the last few weeks that you really know how good or bad the game is. There's a magic point where you have enough of the functionality and content to finally see what it is you've been working on for all those months.

2.00PM

It's NGC again. You free for a chat?
Can you give me ten minutes? I'm kind of in the middle of something…
Oh, right. Don't forget to wash your hands.
(Silence)
Er… okay. Bye!
(Click)

2.20PM

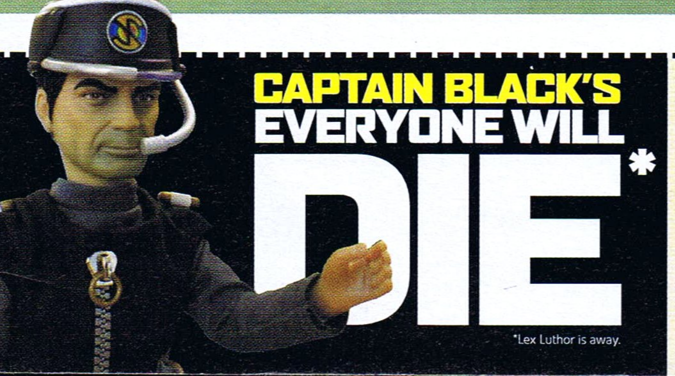
Hello.
Hi. Sorry about that. I was interviewing a bloke who I think might be good as our in-house Sound Designer. Even though we work with specialists in sound design external to the company, I think it makes sense to have someone in the office who concentrates on this 100 per cent every day. It's also nice to have someone around to bounce ideas off.
How did you get into the industry yourself?
Eight years ago I spotted a tiny job advert for an audio programmer at DMA in a local newspaper. Being an avid Lemmings player at the time and having just graduated, it seemed like the perfect job for me. Fortunately Dave Jones, the boss at DMA and Lemmings creator, agreed.
Lucky you.
Well, yes. Quite.

5.13PM

Afternoon! Still busy?
As ever.
What are you doing?
I'm testing the surround sound options I've added to Reign of Fire. It's sounding good (even if I do say so myself). It's nice to whack the volume up on the game and hear those explosions and weapons like they're supposed to sound.
What would you say the toughest thing about your job is? The scooter ride?
The biggest problem is the same as it's always been for audio – fitting everything into the available RAM. It's easier now than it used to be, but players expect better audio in games nowadays. The other thing that occupies a lot of my time is mixing the sound effects properly. Games machines now have the hardware to play back loads of effects simultaneously so it's a bigger challenge than ever making it all sit nicely in the mix. Reign of Fire features a complex sound priority system which can mean as many as 100 sound effects are active simultaneously. So making sure everything sounds as natural as possible takes a lot of time and effort.

7.26PM

You're not still at work, are you?
Yup! And will be for some time yet…
Oh Dear. Up to anything interesting?
I'm adding in some new music I've been sent by the musician James Hannigan. He has composed a really impressive interactive score for Reign of Fire. It sounds very cinematic. In fact, the first time I heard it I thought it had been lifted straight from the movie.
It's amazing just how much of a difference great music can make to games…
Yeah, I agree – but then I would say that. It's nice to see good audio becoming increasingly important in computer games. It's been an area that has often been overlooked in the past, bypassed by the quest for the latest graphic technology. It's always been my view that great audio can substantially enhance gameplay. Now we have the hardware and the technical expertise to prove it!





A



B

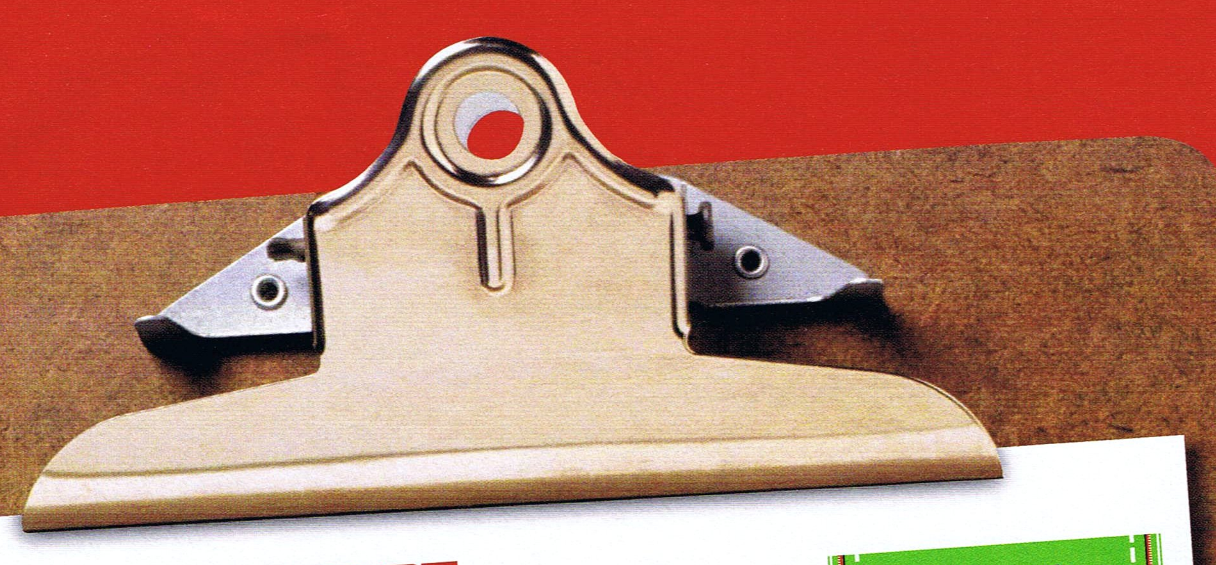


C

WIN A GAME!

Send your solutions to:
Everyone will Die, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA12BW
OR EMAIL: ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Last month's winner: Andrew Warhol, Manchester



THE EVOLUTION OF... FOOTBALL

From monochrome rubbish to fully textured 3D rubbish, and all of the good bits inbetween...

1 ATARI SOCCER

Four-player footie, found in all good arcades circa 1979. The faster you spun the trackball controller, the faster your player would run, only to come to an abrupt halt when the machine took a playful nip at your hand, causing a livid Atari blood blister to form.

In the real world... Scotland



2 MATCH DAY

Fondly remembered, but in retrospect actually a little bit crap. This legendary Spectrum football 'sim' was about as subtle and intelligent as a chainsaw-wielding Millwall fan. The sequel was much better, though.

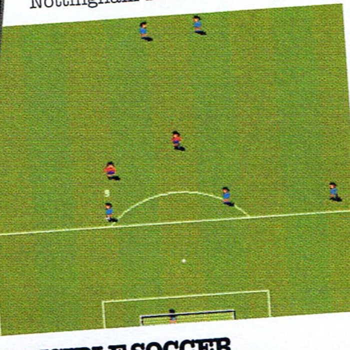
In the real world... Accrington Stanley



3 MICROPROSE SOCCER

For the Commodore 64. The first game with the now-familiar 'aftertouch' method of bending the ball after taking a shot. Programmed by Sensible Software, who went on to even better things with the Amiga.

In the real world... Nottingham Forest



4 KICK OFF

Energetic, exciting, and not quite as good as it thought it was. Changing direction while running with the ball was next to impossible, and caddish players could score direct from the kick off, every single time. Hence the name, probably.

In the real world... England



5 SUPER SOCCER

Football's first flirtation with the newfangled world of 3D, featuring the SNES equivalent of Yeovil Town's famous sloping pitch. Whichever player was shooting 'down' the screen couldn't actually see the goal until he was almost in the penalty area. Oh, and the Columbian goalie 'El Loco' simply couldn't be tackled.

In the real world... Blackburn



6 SENSIBLE SOCCER

Sensible Software returned with a vengeance and a supremely gifted football game. Like a more playable version of Kick Off, with sequels that included players from every league in the world. Even the Welsh one.

In the real world... Holland

7 INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

Descended from a vintage MSX game, ISS hit the big time on the SNES and was the best 3D footie game in the world on the N64. Still struggling to recapture its former glories, but on its day ISS was more than a match for any footie game you cared to compare it with.

In the real world... Liverpool



8 SOCCER KID

In 1994, after the World Cup was stolen by aliens and split into five pieces, all meaningful football activity was put on hold. Fans from every nation watched with baited breath as a young boy used the power of his football skills to defeat the alien menace, thereby allowing Brazil to win the dullest World Cup final since 1990.

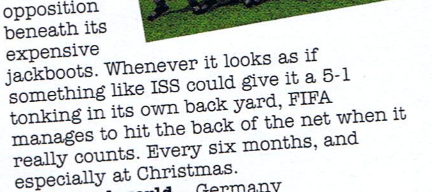
In the real world... Wimbledon



9 FIFA SOCCER

The relentless FIFA franchise marches on, crushing technically superior opposition beneath its expensive jackboots. Whenever it looks as if something like ISS could give it a 5-1 tonking in its own back yard, FIFA manages to hit the back of the net when it really counts. Every six months, and especially at Christmas.

In the real world... Germany





NGC TOP10

10 THINGS YOU CAN'T FIND IN ANIMAL CROSSING

1. **SNIPER RIFLE** When the hunting season begins you need something to give you that extra edge. With night sights.
2. **AIR BISCUITS** Cook up an air biscuit and you can drop it anywhere you like. In your friend's house, at Tom Nook's place, anywhere!
3. **SHERBET** Befriend a lady animal, give her some of this, and she can make a fortune befriending Tom Nook's poker companions.
4. **BEAR TRAPS** Drop one of these and you might catch any of the town's residents. You can then sell them on to...
5. **TOM NOOK'S FUR COAT SHOP** Chinchilla? Mink? Spaniel? Trade exotic pelts with your friends thanks to Tom Nook.
6. **COUNCIL ESTATE** Filled with cars on bricks, plus a load of gypsies on the nearby wasteland. Don't forget to visit the tower block!
7. **ONE-MAN CRIMEWAVE** Buy the special burglar's outfit and you can clean out the whole town in an afternoon.
8. **TRAFFIC** After the third week, a bypass is built right through the heart of the village. Spend hours waiting to cross the road.
9. **POST OFFICE QUEUES** Don't bother going there on a Thursday morning because it'll be full of animals that smell of wee.
10. **MATCHES** As soon as you find the matches you can have lots of fun finding out what kinds of things burn the best.





Your guide to the Nintendo world's most exotic games.

ZOIDS VERSUS



FACTS FOR THE TRAVELLER

GETTING THERE Travel packages available online, or via specialists such as the Japan Centre, London, or CA Games (Tel 0141 334 3901)
CURRENCY ¥6,800 (approx £35)
LANGUAGE Japanese
ELECTRICITY Japanese Gamecubes (100V; 50Hz) only
POPULATION Men and machines
DEVELOPMENT Tomy
HEALTH RISKS Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, shell shock







Make mechanical machines meet their metal maker, while weird and wonderful weapons wipe out whole worlds…

HISTORY

Zoids Versus is very much an example of a municipal zone taking an innovative approach to urban planning. After extensive nuclear testing – and some minor instances of nuclear fallout – a largely desolated and barren region of middle Japan was re-developed into a state-of-the-art mechanical simulation battleground, where military professionals and enthusiastic amateurs could do battle encased inside giant robotic beasts.

Needless to say, the pastime soon raised interest overseas and Zoids Versus is now a world-renowned tourist attraction for those after some first-hand white-knuckle thrills. Indeed, it has also spawned a popular children's plastic toy franchise.

EVENTS

Combat is the main draw here, with human participants selecting a metallic fighting animal (a Zoid) – which often possesses the size and movement of a dinosaur – and going mano a mano with each another to the symbolic 'death'. To the victor go battle points, which are akin to a local currency and can be redeemed for extra attributes and artillery for one's Zoid.

While a participant's opponent can often be arbitrary, there is a mechanism in place to allow battle against a specified friend or foe. Indeed, it is this personal aspect of Zoids Versus which has seen so many coming back.

ATTRACTIONS

Zoids Versus may at first seem to represent a testosterone-filled playground designed only to satiate the hankering for violence prevalent in the male psyche, but closer examination reveals it to be free of such gender discrimination. By placing the player inside a mammoth metallic Zoid of their choosing, their physical make-up becomes irrelevant. So it's no surprise to see that some of the most feared Zoids are commanded by females, such as Tita and Claudia, as well as scrawny young boys and frail old men.



TRAVEL TIP *The implementation of a real-time physics-based shock system means that it is unwise for beginners to select a Zoid who trades defensive attributes for pure firepower. Doing so can leave the battered crew quite dazed and shell-shocked!*

CULTURE

It is imperative that visitors understand the background behind Zoids Versus (see History). Being in part the product





of a minor nuclear testing disaster, sponsors have always sought to play up the fantasy element of the experience. Therefore, respect for an opponent is paramount, and any 'harm' is merely aimed towards their Zoid.

It is this emphasis upon the values of honour and respect – as embellished in many traditional kung-fu films and eastern cultures – which means that the Zoids Versus experience is unlikely to make it to western climes.

ACTIVITIES

While pure combat is still the most popular of activities, the organisers have recently expanded the ambit to include mission-based simulations, where maze-like environments take the place of the usual wide-open spaces. However, the goal is still to decimate an opponent!

FURTHER READING

• A quick search on www.ign.com reveals background information on the Zoids Versus experience.

• Those finding themselves infatuated by the prospect of Zoids Versus appearing in the US can sign a petition of support at http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/806414533. At the time of writing, no such similar movement has been established in the UK.





USEFUL PHRASES

You won't stay long if you don't learn the best way to use your Zoid's full range and arsenal of attacks. They can be broken down into three categories…



1. All Zoids come fully equipped with these primary laser cannons as standard. While they lack somewhat in terms of range and power, ammo is plentiful and deft use of them has seen many a victory.



2. At the flick of a button a Zoid's secondary weapon can be assigned and locked on to the nearest target. These take longer to fire off, but key use of them is vital to a successful Zoids Versus experience.



3. Used both as a last resort and for those times when your foes get too close for comfort, all Zoids are capable of pulling off a highly-charged, and highly dangerous body attack – with frequently spectacular results.


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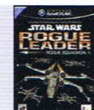

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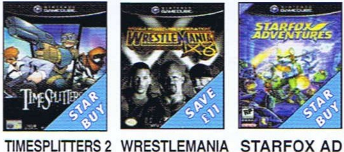
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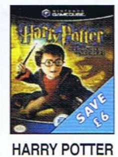














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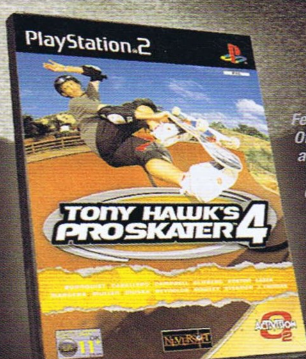
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PSM 2

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER™ 4

DROP IN TO THE ULTIMATE SKATEBOARDING CHALLENGE!

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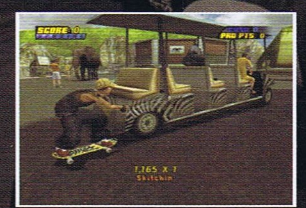
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater™4 is the ultimate challenge. Pros challenge you to make your mark in huge free-roaming levels, taking on 190 progressively harder goals with no time limits to hold you back. Decide when you're ready to take on your Pro Challenge and move into the pro ranks, where it's a whole new game. Build your skills, earn respect, and show that you've got what it takes to Go Pro...



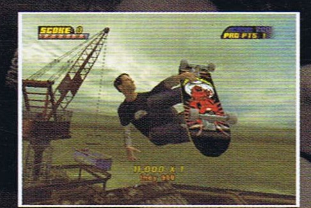
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PlayStation.2

Compatible with Playstation® game console and compatible with Playstation® 2 computer entertainment system.





NINTENDO GAMECUBE



Vicarious Visions



PlayStation® 2 computer entertainment system screenshots shown.

ACTIVISION O2
SPORTS REVOLUTION

